

Wilfrid Laurier University

Scholars Commons @ Laurier

Theses and Dissertations (Comprehensive)

2016

Leadership Practice, Organizational Culture and New Managerialism: Strengths, Challenges, Variations and Contradictions in Three Children's Service Agencies

Rosemary E. Vito

Wilfrid Laurier University, rvito4@uwo.ca

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholars.wlu.ca/etd>



Part of the [Leadership Studies Commons](#), [Public Affairs, Public Policy and Public Administration Commons](#), and the [Social Work Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Vito, Rosemary E., "Leadership Practice, Organizational Culture and New Managerialism: Strengths, Challenges, Variations and Contradictions in Three Children's Service Agencies" (2016). *Theses and Dissertations (Comprehensive)*. 1843.

<https://scholars.wlu.ca/etd/1843>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by Scholars Commons @ Laurier. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations (Comprehensive) by an authorized administrator of Scholars Commons @ Laurier. For more information, please contact scholarscommons@wlu.ca.

LEADERSHIP PRACTICE, ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND
NEW MANAGERIALISM:
STRENGTHS, CHALLENGES, VARIATIONS AND CONTRADICTIONS IN THREE
CHILDREN'S SERVICE AGENCIES

by

Rosemary Elizabeth Vito

M.S.W., Wilfrid Laurier University, 1990

DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Faculty of Social Work
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for

Doctor of Philosophy in Social Work

Wilfrid Laurier University

© Rosemary Elizabeth Vito 2016

Abstract

The purpose of this research study was to explore how social work leaders conceptualized and practiced leadership and how their leadership practice influenced, and was shaped by, organizational culture. The relevance and viability of a participatory leadership approach and a collaborative learning culture were also explored. As well, leadership satisfaction and development and the impact of external changes were sought. A qualitative research approach, multiple case study and multi-method design were employed. Forty-one directors and supervisors in three children's mental health and child welfare agencies in Ontario participated in this study. Research methods included interviews, focus groups, observations and document review, with thematic data analysis, member checking and triangulation of methods to develop emerging themes and strengthen findings. Overall findings were mixed. On the positive side, directors and supervisors appeared knowledgeable about ideal leadership practices. On the negative side, the external context was having a major impact on leadership practice. Even with this negative influence, the leadership practices and organizational cultures varied among the three agencies. Together, these findings revealed the constant change and adaptation required by social work leaders to ensure organizational survival. Competing forces included business skills vs. quality client services; risk taking and innovation vs. ministry requirements; new initiatives vs. limited resources; community collaboration vs. competition; and sector leadership development vs. lack of investment. These contradictions raise essential questions about the feasibility of current ministry strategic directions and the unintended consequences on multiple levels that may result. Further research is warranted to explore leadership strategies that simultaneously challenge these contradictions while operating within them.

Acknowledgments

Writing this dissertation has been the most challenging, time-consuming and ultimately rewarding endeavour I have undertaken in my academic career. There are several people I would like to acknowledge during this journey. First and foremost I would like to thank my family, especially my husband Ed and my children Diana and Greg, for their unending support, patience and listening ear as they traversed this long and winding path with me. I would also like to thank my parents, Marion and Chris Vito, for their continued faith and belief in my capabilities.

A well-deserved thank you goes to Dr. Eli Teram, my Research Advisor, for his wisdom in guiding me through this process. His extensive knowledge and experience, and his patience in reviewing previous drafts of this dissertation, have been instrumental in leading me to this point. I would also like to express my gratitude to my esteemed committee members: Dr. Wes Shera, for his extensive knowledge and generous sharing of social work leadership literature; Dr. Lamine Diallo, for his considerable knowledge of business leadership literature; and Dr. Nancy Freymond, for her understanding of child welfare and children's mental health practice contexts. I am indebted to all of you for walking alongside me on this journey.

Finally, I would like to thank the directors and supervisors who participated in this research, for sharing their considerable knowledge and experience. Their contributions have provided keen insights about the strengths and challenges of practicing leadership in the current children's services organizational context. The rich and varied findings provide much food for thought around how to successfully adapt and thrive as leaders in an increasingly complex and sometimes contradictory environment. It is my hope that these findings will provide a starting point to guide future social work leaders on navigating these challenges and developing the knowledge and skills required to be successful leaders.

Table of Contents

Chapters	Pages
Preface	v-vi
Chapter 1: Introduction	1-13
Chapter 2: Conceptual Framework and Literature Review	14-46
Chapter 3: Methodology	47-66
Chapter 4: Participating Agencies	67-71
Chapter 5: Leadership Conceptualization and Practice	72-108
Chapter 6: Impact of the External Context	109-134
Chapter 7: Agency #2 (Children's Mental Health, 0-14 years)	135-166
Chapter 8: Agency #3 (Children's Mental Health, 12-18 years)	167-191
Chapter 9: Agency #1 (Child Welfare, 0-16 years)	192-225
Chapter 10: Discussion and Conclusion	226-264
Appendices (A-S)	265-291
References	292-307

Preface

My interest in the topic of leadership stems from my previous twenty years' experience as a clinical supervisor and worker in children's mental health services. I observed both positive and negative leadership practices during that time and noticed how these practices influenced organizational culture. These observations motivated me to further develop my knowledge and understanding of effective leadership practices. I chose to situate my research in children's mental health and child welfare agencies because I am familiar with both of these contexts. My knowledge of these contexts helped me to conduct this research and to interpret the results.

I admit that prior to undertaking this research I had a preference for participatory leadership approaches, based on my own leadership experience and my reading about the benefits of this approach. What I did not anticipate in undertaking this research was the major impact of the external context, which significantly constrained leaders' practice and their influence on organizational culture. A shift in my thinking that resulted was greater appreciation for this broader context and more consideration of how social work leaders can be adequately prepared to respond effectively to these challenges.

I also need to acknowledge that the interpretive paradigm was the epistemological framework that informed my research perspective. This is one of the four paradigms in Burrell and Morgan's (1979) framework, which classifies different sociological theories based on their ontological and epistemological assumptions. The interpretive paradigm views reality as subjective, contextual and based on shared meanings and it focuses on regulation and improving current practices rather than radically changing the status quo. The primary research goal in this paradigm is to understand and interpret ongoing social processes. This paradigm fits with my perspective of reality and research goals. I acknowledge the multiple subjectivities of the participants and myself in this research process. I was interested in participants' shared meanings

of their leadership practice and organizational culture. I strove to understand and interpret the findings based on the broader external context, in order to improve current practices. Leadership research within this paradigm emphasizes relational, collective and emergent processes, which fits with my perspective.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Purpose and Rationale

Leadership and culture are important dimensions to organizational success and they have been studied extensively in the business literature. They are equally important in the human services organizational context; however, the literature is sparse in this area (Hardina, Middleton, Montana & Simpson, 2007), especially within a Canadian context. Social work leadership in children's mental health and child welfare agencies in Ontario is especially relevant. Currently, these sectors are facing unprecedented change with a ministry system transformation agenda, shift to lead agencies (i.e. mandated collaboration between agencies with one agency designated as the lead), new funding models and accountability measures (MCYS, Jan. 2013, Sept. 2013). Effective leadership is critical to adapt to these complex changes, yet most social work leaders do not have the required knowledge, skills, training and education (Healy, 2002; Hopkins et al., 2014; Lawler, 2007; Wuenschel, 2006). Compounding this issue, there is a gap between social work leadership literature and practice (Hardina et al., 2007). To address this gap, this study focuses on leadership practice and organizational culture during system transformation in selected children's mental health and child welfare agencies in Ontario. This research is important because it informs leadership practices that effectively adapt to organizational and external challenges. It also contributes to the sparse Canadian literature on social work leadership.

Specifically, the purpose of this research study was to explore how leaders understood and practiced leadership and how their leadership practice influenced, and was shaped by, organizational culture. The relevance and viability of a participatory leadership approach and collaborative learning culture were also explored. Additionally, leadership development,

satisfaction and the impact of external changes on leadership practice were sought (see Chapter 3, Methodology, for detailed research questions). The rationale underlying this research study originated from the current challenges in the external context that human service organizations are facing and the need for effective leadership as a result. Factors to consider include the present government shift to new managerialism with funding cutbacks and increased accountability measures, the rise in leaders employing business management strategies as a coping mechanism, and the resulting negative consequences for services and staff. These factors are described further below.

1.2 Shift to New Managerialism and Business Strategies

Human service organizations (HSO's) are challenged with an increasing complex environment and market culture and effective leadership is critical to successful adaptation (Hasenfeld, 2010a). Several authors have documented an increasing government focus on accountability, efficiency and competition for resources (Hasenfeld, 2010a; Healy, 2002; Rank & Hutchison, 2000), managerial control, quality and risk management (Lawler & Bilson, 2010), and bureaucratization and de-professionalization of social work (Barnoff, George & Coleman, 2006; Lawler, 2007; Westhues, Lafrance & Schmidt, 2001). The characteristics of new managerialism are described succinctly by Lawler (2007):

A change in culture where concepts of quality, competition, value for money and choice become key in service delivery; the development of performance measures for social work organizations; greater authority delegated to managers for service delivery; and a focus on key strategic organizational objectives. (p. 128)

Previous research has demonstrated that leaders in HSO's are using business management strategies to cope with provincial government funding shortages and service

constraints. For example, Foster and Meinhard (2002) documented drastic reductions in government spending within Ontario, forcing social service organizations to respond with a variety of business strategies. These strategies included marketing to enhance their image to funders, raising public awareness, and generating revenue through fundraising, which many leaders did not feel adequately skilled in using. Similarly, a study of feminist social service agencies in Toronto confirms that they were trying to maintain a commitment to empowerment and anti-oppressive practice; however, due to increasing funding shortages, they were preoccupied with organizational survival and competition for resources (Barnoff et al., 2006).

Despite the challenges associated with business management models, they appear to be a necessary response to the changing government funding and accountability requirements. These models focus on hierarchical structures, linear accountability, quality management, performance measures and outcomes (Lawler, 2007). Some argue this business focus conflicts with client-centered social work practice, workers' professional decision-making and client voice, and are ineffective in a social work environment (Lawler & Bilson, 2010). Others uphold that by centralizing power business models lead to poor quality and fragmented client service delivery, dissatisfied staff and less personal and organizational development (Shera & Page, 1995). In contrast, some authors acknowledge the importance of evidenced-based practice and management (Briggs & McBeath, 2009) and argue that performance-based, cost effective programs can be integrated with client centered service approaches and available evidence (McBeath & Briggs, 2008).

As human service organizations compete for scarce resources there have been drastic consequences, including budget cuts, staffing losses, reduced client services, rising caseloads, decreased professional development and autonomy; these consequences are all contributing to

“disempowering conditions” for social workers (Turner & Shera, 2005, p. 83). Within the Canadian context, a nationwide study by Westhues et al. (2001) reported a marked increase in demand for services and complexity of client needs while financial and human resources dwindled. These authors concluded that “social work is increasingly being constrained within narrowly defined functions that have more to do with market considerations than the development of quality services that achieve solid outcomes” (p. 46). Similarly, Aronson and Sammon (2000) report that cost cutting measures and preoccupation with efficiency have historically been acute in health and child welfare sectors in Ontario, constraining social workers’ practice and provision of quality client services. Social workers were reduced to “small victories” of supporting individual clients that remained unnoticed and masked the broader systemic and organizational issues (p. 182). More recently, the vast majority (80%) of human service organizations in the U.S. experienced service demand increases along with inadequate funding, staffing and technology resources to meet these demands (Hopkins, Meyer, Shera & Peters, 2014). The increased pressure and lack of support that social workers are facing in practice reveals the changing nature and complexity of the current human service environment and the corresponding challenges to provide quality client services.

1.3 Child Welfare (CAS) and Children’s Mental Health (CMH) Contexts

Funding constraints and accountability measures are prominent in child welfare and children’s mental health agencies in Ontario. In child welfare, Ministry of Child and Youth Services (MCYS) funding to the sector grew substantively (65% in 2005/06) in response to increased service demand (OACAS, 2006). While the ministry has invested 1.6 billion dollars, a new funding model, based on socio-economic and volume factors, has been introduced that again promises to scale back on services (MCYS, 2014). Reconfiguration and amalgamation of child

welfare agencies with mergers has also resulted in some funding cutbacks (Brotten, 2010). The Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies (OACAS, 2014) contends that the ongoing ministry change agenda (funding model formula, fixed funding envelope, accountability agreements, balanced budget requirements), is "extensive and aggressive" (p.4).

Along with funding changes, child welfare agencies are coping with a recent ministry framework calling for fundamental changes to the system (MCYS, Jan. 2013). This includes policy and practice changes, such as cross-sector collaboration and cross-ministry partnerships, to share resources and better support youth leaving foster care (MCYS, Jan. 2013). These changes also include increased accountability measures (performance indicators and outcomes), new information and financial data systems (Child Protection Information Network or CPIN), and more permanency options for children and youth in care (MCYS, 2014). OACAS confirmed the year was "full of challenge and change" as they focused on system development (CPIN) and public reporting of performance indicators to increase accountability and transparency (OACAS, 2015, p.1). They also assumed an advocacy and support role on behalf of agencies, which resulted in quality performance indicators and leadership training (OACAS, 2014). There are also expectations for child welfare agencies to adopt evidence-informed practices, linking research to practice with resources and tools provided by PART (Practice and Research Together, n.d.), and providing implementation tools to assess and embed these practices into organizational culture (Austin & Claassen, 2008). As well, there are arguments about whether child welfare should be providing earlier intervention services rather than crisis response, and tensions regarding which service, child welfare or children's mental health, should be providing this earlier intervention (Freymond et al., 2012).

Children's mental health agencies are facing similar funding challenges and accountability measures. Historically, there has been a chronic lack of inflationary funding for this sector, 8% since 1992 (CMHO, 2013). Recently however, there have been multiple new investments in children's mental health services. For example, in 2013, there were 770 new mental health workers in schools and communities, 800 new mental health consultations through videoconferencing, and \$8.6 million for mental health leads in school boards (MCYS, June, 2013). In 2014, there was \$505.6 million to improve client service coordination, responsiveness, accessibility, quality and effectiveness using evidence-based practices (MCYS 2014). In 2016, there was \$6 million to hire 80 new child and youth mental health workers, for an overall total of more than \$444 million investment since 2011 (MCYS, 2016).

Children's Mental Health Ontario (2015) acknowledges these multiple investments have reduced wait times for brief and short-term services. However, they reveal a continued lack of investment in agencies' base funding and longer-term services along with increased service demand. Residential treatment services in particular are facing budgetary challenges due to a lack of inflationary funding, mandatory staff training and ratios, building maintenance and liability insurance (CMHO, 2014). As a result, CMHO (2016) is seeking another \$65 million (over the next five years) to further improve service access and quality and retain staff through raised salaries, thereby reducing wait times and hospital admissions for more costly treatment and enhancing service pathways and coordination.

Along with challenges in base funding, children's mental health agencies are facing a ministry transformation agenda. As part of their *Moving on Mental Health* strategy (MCYS, 2012), the ministry is establishing thirty-four lead agencies across Ontario to improve the access, accountability, evidence and coordination of children's mental health services (MCYS, Sept.

2013). This is being achieved by creating ‘pathways to care’ across the service system, defining core mental health services with program guidelines and requirements, ensuring lead agencies are responsible for developing core services and collaborating with partners across sectors (e.g. health and education), and creating a new funding model and accountability framework, over a three year timeline (MCYS, 2012, p. 5). While this initiative is positive in terms of improved client services and cross-sector collaboration (CMHO, 2015b), CMHO cautions that additional human and technology resources and training will be required to support lead agencies in their expanded role. This role includes meeting ministry expectations for quality assurance, data collection and analysis, outcome measurement, program evaluation, and inter-agency coordination (CMHO, 2014, p.8). These ministry expectations are coupled with an increasing focus on using evidence-informed tools and practices, to promote continuous quality improvement, evaluation and performance outcomes, such as those promoted by the Ontario Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health (n.d.).

The recent directions noted above are based on the ministry’s current strategic plan *Growing Together*, which focuses on: service integration and working collaboratively with cross-sector partners; being outcome-driven and using evidence based research and program evaluation; an accountability framework with measurable goals to improve service quality, efficiency and effectiveness; and organizational health and excellence with “healthy, skilled and inspired” workers and “leadership and innovation at all levels” (MCYS, March 2014, pp. 29-32). Some authors have noted the current trend in human services towards a lack of sufficient funding, staffing and technology resources to respond to growing demands for service and accountability, requiring a need for “adaptive leadership” and innovation (Hopkins et al., 2014, p. 20). While these priorities intensify the complexity that leaders in child welfare and children’s

mental health agencies are currently facing, they can also be used positively by leaders to further a more enlightened agenda. Either way, leaders at all levels in these agencies will be required to effectively adapt to these challenges, as discussed further below.

1.4 The Need for Social Work Leadership and an Innovative Culture

Social work leaders are preferred over business leaders in HSO's because they are more likely to understand the importance of social work values, such as social justice and empowerment, and the development of practice skills (CASW, 2005; Healy, 2002; Wuenschel, 2006). To be effective leaders, social workers need to be prepared to meet the challenges posed by new managerialism. However, most social workers have been promoted into leadership positions without the necessary knowledge, skills and training and many schools of social work do not educate social workers for administrative positions (Hopkins et al., 2014; Healy, 2002; Lawler, 2007; Rank & Hutchison, 2000; Wuenschel, 2006). As a result, HSO's are increasingly being managed by business leaders with training in management and economics (Healy, 2002; Wuenschel, 2006). Business leaders are not educated in social work values and the moral basis that guides decision-making and they may prioritize cost-effectiveness over service quality (Wuenschel, 2006). This trend is also happening in the Canadian context and there is recognition of the need to provide business management skills in Canadian schools of social work as a result (Westhues et al., 2001). As Healy (2002) warns, "social workers are losing ground in achieving management positions in human service organizations...it compromises their capacity to exercise professional leadership and decision-making" (p. 528).

Effective leadership and a responsive culture are critical for HSO's to survive in the current market culture. As Hasenfeld (2010a) explains: "The capacity of the organizations to change and implement new innovations will depend, in part, on an organizational culture that

supports risk taking and experimentation, a visionary leadership, and an internal structure marked by specialization, professionalization, and diversity” (p. 3). Leaders who promote creative and innovative ideas among their workers foster an adaptive climate for human services to thrive during constant change (Uhl-Bien & Marion, 2011). By involving workers and clients in key organizational decisions, leaders are more likely to develop innovative solutions, which is critical in the context of new managerialism. As Lawler and Bilson (2010) uphold:

If organizations are to survive and be effective in these [changing] circumstances they have to become more flexible to adapt to such changes, and more tolerant of uncertainty...a change from attempting to manage uncertainty *out* of organizational processes to an acceptance of the need to manage *with* uncertainty. (p.17)

1.5 Participatory Leadership and Research Gap in Human Services

One leadership approach that shows promise for managing in this complex environment is participatory leadership. This is an emerging, collaborative approach that focuses on empowering and engaging others, by involving workers and clients in key decision-making processes (Hardina et al., 2007). This type of leadership supports the core functions of social work, by building clients’ strengths and service access, increasing worker satisfaction and service provision, and improving program quality (Hardina et al., 2007; Hopkins & Austin, 2004). Participatory leadership also contributes to a collaborative culture, by encouraging staff to experiment with innovative ideas, critically reflect on their experiences, and share their knowledge with others, leading to improved organizational outcomes (Hopkins & Austin, 2004). These leadership processes have the potential to respond to the complexity HSO’s are facing; however, it is unclear to what extent they are possible in the present context.

Despite the importance of effective leadership in the current HSO context and the potential relevance of participatory leadership approaches, most leadership research has been conducted in the business sector, focusing on the individual qualities of senior leaders (Hardina et al., 2007). Organizational culture has also not been studied sufficiently to develop new concepts that either support current theory or lead to new theory (Schein, 2010, p. 2). To address this research gap, this study explored how leadership was understood and practiced in selected child welfare and children's mental health organizations in Ontario. The realities of the current HSO context and the leadership practices identified in the literature were kept in mind. Child welfare and children's mental health service sectors were chosen for this study given the transformation agenda they were facing and their practice context, which provided a rich environment to study their leadership practice while undergoing these changes. Comparing these two types of organizations also yielded interesting findings regarding the similarities and differences of their leadership practice and organizational culture, depending on their context and challenges.

1.6 Overview of Findings and Organization of Chapters

The following chapters present the findings from this study, highlighting both the strengths and challenges of leadership practice and organizational culture. On the positive side, directors and supervisors appeared knowledgeable about what the literature considers ideal leadership practices and they ascribed to various leadership approaches, including participatory leadership to some degree; this is the good news. On the negative side, the external context was having a major impact on the organizational culture of these agencies and constraining directors' leadership practice, such that there was a gap between their ideal and actual leadership practices in some areas; this is the bad news. Even with this negative influence, directors' and supervisors'

leadership practices and organizational cultures varied considerably among the three agencies, and the extent of their leadership satisfaction and development was also variable. The factors that account for these distinct differences in leadership practice and organizational culture will be highlighted throughout these chapters, culminating in the Discussion (Chapter 10).

This dissertation is organized into several chapters. The first three chapters introduce the study, lay the conceptual foundations and literature review, and describe the methodology employed. The next six chapters review the major findings of the study, beginning with a description of the participating agencies to provide context. The findings around leadership conceptualization and ideal practices are presented and then contrasted with the findings around the external environment. The variations in organizational culture for each agency are then discussed in detail, noting incongruencies with actual leadership practices, and variations in leadership development and satisfaction. The final chapter discusses the findings and conclusions, integrating relevant literature, followed by appendices and references. These chapters are explained in further detail below.

Chapter 2, Conceptual framework and literature review, begins with a brief review of leadership history, debates, definition, and characteristics, followed by a conceptual mapping of the leadership literature, which organizes the various theories and models. Research on various aspects of participatory leadership in human services is also reviewed. The link between participatory leadership approaches and a collaborative culture are integrated, and a framework for organizational culture is presented and connected to leadership practice. The specific elements of leadership and organizational culture that informed this study are highlighted.

Chapter 3, Methodology, includes the research design, data collection, and data analysis. The research design includes the research questions and approach. The data collection includes

information about the agency recruitment and selection, interview schedule and multiple methods used, participant demographics, research ethics approval and informed consent statement, researcher role and experience, data transcription, coding and member checking. The data analysis explains the thematic analysis and emerging key themes, agency reports and presentation of findings, research standards and evaluation criteria followed, and limitations.

Chapter 4, Participating agencies, presents a brief description of each agency to lay the foundation of their unique context. The order in which the agencies are presented is based on their relative strengths in leadership practice and organizational culture. Agency 2 is presented first as they exhibited strengths in several areas, followed by agency 3 and 1.

Chapter 5, Leadership conceptualization and practice, presents the elements of ideal leadership practices, highlighting the common and contrasting themes that arose in all three agencies. Themes included: leadership approaches, shared visioning, role modelling, motivating and influencing others, building trusting relationships, strength-based teamwork, managing authority and dealing with conflict.

Chapter 6, Impact of the external environment, presents the challenges of the external context for all three agencies, as they were similar. These challenges centered on four main areas: funding constraints, ministry directions, community relationships, and succession planning. Each area is discussed, with the common and contrasting themes that arose, due to the unique challenges each agency faced.

Chapters 7-9, Organizational culture and interaction with leadership practice, presents the elements of organizational culture for each agency and how these interacted with leadership practices. These chapters highlight some incongruence between ideal and actual leadership practices, and variations in organizational culture, leadership satisfaction and development

within each agency. Organizational culture elements include: mission vision and values, organizational structure and culture, learning culture, staff recognition and wellness, sharing information, responding to feedback and mistakes, decision-making and problem-solving processes, change management processes, performance management and discipline.

Chapter 10, Discussion and conclusion, highlights the unique features, strengths and challenges for each agency, along with the new learning gained. The general themes around leadership practice, development and the external context and reflected on and elaborated. Relevant literature is integrated and questions are raised for further consideration. Concluding thoughts are shared, and areas for further research are suggested.

Appendices and references, provides appendices with detailed information about the research methods employed, and a listing of academic references cited in the various chapters of this dissertation.

Chapter 2: Conceptual Framework and Literature Review

This chapter provides an overview of the conceptual foundations for this study. The primary conceptual foundation for this study is leadership, with particular focus on participatory leadership approaches, given their aforementioned benefits. To lay the foundation, a brief review of leadership history, debates, definition, characteristics and skills is provided, noting the complexity of this topic. This is followed by a conceptual mapping of the leadership literature, which organizes the various theories and models into two main perspectives. Participatory leadership approaches are then presented in more detail and a review of the research literature on this approach is provided. While much of this research is dated, from the preceding two decades, it does provide important background context. Also given the potential benefits of a collaborative learning culture, this type of culture is discussed and integrated with participatory leadership approaches, noting strengths and challenges. Finally, given the interactive nature of leadership and organizational culture, a brief overview of organizational culture focusing on its connection to leadership, is provided. Within this discussion, the specific elements of leadership and organizational culture that informed this research study are highlighted and summarized in appendices.

2.1 Leadership History, Debates, Definition, Characteristics and Skills

The historical context of leadership is critical to understanding the current and emerging perspectives of this field. According to Grint (2011), there has been a swinging pendulum in leadership studies during the twentieth century, focusing on either rational, scientific models (e.g. Theory X and Y, competencies) or cultural, human relations models (e.g. corporate cultures, total quality management). These swings were influenced by the broader socio- political and economic context of the time period. Most recently, the pendulum on leadership has swung back

to a cultural focus on transformational leadership, emotional intelligence, and inspirational missions and visions. Leadership models will likely continue to swing in the future.

According to Lawler (2007), there continues to be debates about leadership. The first debate is the issue of controlling workers versus engaging their commitment. Engaging others collectively towards change is now accepted as a more preferable leadership approach rather than controlling them. Second, there is the issue of individual leadership based on position versus shared leadership based on function. Increasingly, there is recognition that everyone can demonstrate leadership ability, thus dispelling the myth that only senior managers can engage in leadership. Third, research on leadership has focused on white, male, senior leaders versus an inclusive perspective that recognizes diversity. This is a narrow approach especially in human services, where diversity issues are prominent. Fourth, there is a tension between management that focuses on efficiency and regulation, versus leadership that focuses on change and motivation. Recently, there is recognition of overlap and the need for both areas for organizations to be successful. Some authors assert that “effective leadership and management are central to organizational viability” (Lewis, Packard & Lewis, 2012, p. 279). There is also a fundamental debate in the literature as to whether leadership impacts organizational effectiveness. This issue was addressed by Parry (2011), who presented research evidence that leadership impacts performance at the individual, team and organizational level. Similarly, other authors assert that “organizational effectiveness is more a function of leadership competence” (Lewis et al., 2012, p. 279). In summary, the evidence suggests that in the context of human services, where the empowerment of workers and marginalized clients is paramount, engaging others in shared leadership and recognizing their diverse contributions is essential.

Scholars disagree on the concept of leadership, as it is complex and multifaceted to define, and their underlying beliefs inform their varying perspectives (Sorenson, Goethals, & Haber, 2011). As a result, leadership is a contested concept, and there is no comprehensive, commonly accepted definition (Lawler & Bilson, 2010). Various models and theories focus on the different elements of leadership, based on the person, position, process or results, which adds to the confusion (Holosko, 2009; Lawler & Bilson, 2010). Despite the challenge of defining leadership, there is general agreement that leadership is a process of influencing others to achieve a common goal (Northouse, 2013) and involves being able to inspire others to create a shared vision (Hardina et al., 2007; Kouzes & Posner, 2007). Some authors assert that leadership plays a central role in organizations, as “leadership is the unifying factor for all management processes” and suggest that “managers at all levels need to be leaders” (Lewis et al., 2012, p. 16).

Similar leadership attributes have been identified within social work and the broader non-profit sector: creating a shared vision, modeling by example and influencing others, enabling others to act through teamwork and collaboration, challenging process and problem-solving through innovation, taking risks and learning, and creating and celebrating positive changes and successes (Holosko, 2009; Kouzes & Posner, 2007). These authors recognize that leadership is an evolving process that occurs in relationship with others and they endorse common leadership characteristics, such as: honesty and integrity, future orientation and decisiveness, inspiration and positive energy, competence and confidence (Holosko, 2009; Kouzes & Posner, 2007). While these general leadership characteristics have been researched extensively in the business sector (Kouzes & Posner, 2007), they have been explored in a limited way in social work (Holosko, 2009), which provided an opportunity to examine them further in practice for this study (see Appendix A).

Along with these leadership characteristics, there is also recognition that leaders require certain skills, which vary depending on the management level in organizations. According to Northouse (2013), based on previous work by Katz, there are three skillsets that leaders require: technical, human and conceptual. The relative importance of these skills depends on the leaders' position in the organization. Technical skills include knowledge and ability to work with specific things, being hands-on with products or processes, and they are most important in supervisory and middle management positions. Human skills include knowledge and ability to work effectively with people, taking their perspective into account to meet common goals, and they are equally important in supervisory, middle and top management positions. Conceptual skills include knowledge and ability to work with ideas, such as creating a vision and strategic plan for the organization, and they are most important in top and middle management positions. A study by Mumford, Campion and Morgeson (2007), reinforces the different need for these skills based on management position. Cognitive (communication and learning) and interpersonal (human) skills were required for those in all levels of management positions; business skills (human and financial resource management) and strategic skills (visioning, environmental scanning, problem-solving to manage complexity and ambiguity) were required for those in senior management positions. The present study provided an opportunity to explore these skills at different organizational levels, as it included both director and supervisor leadership positions.

2.2 Conceptual Mapping of the Leadership Literature

Along with leadership characteristics and skills, there are various leadership models and theories in the literature. Lawler and Bilson (2010) have developed a conceptual framework of leadership that organizes the various models and theories based on their underlying assumptions. This framework is divided into rational scientific and reflective pluralist leadership perspectives

and mirrors the historical pendulum swings noted above (see Appendix B). Given the relevance of these perspectives to understanding leadership conceptually, they will be described further below, along with their strengths and limitations.

Rational scientific perspectives of leadership are based on a modernist set of underlying assumptions: reality is external and objective, management practice can be transferred regardless of context, organizations are stable and change is planned, incremental, predictable and task focused, leadership is bureaucratic and rational, ethics are pragmatic, and decisions are made by objective data and logic (Lawler & Bilson, 2010, p. 20). This view of leadership corresponds to traditional, bureaucratic organizations, which have a clearly defined, hierarchical structure and culture, top-down decision-making, power and control, formal written policies and procedures, evaluation measures and reporting relationships (Hardina et al., 2007; O'Connor & Netting, 2009). Leadership models and theories from this perspective are based on organizational position and focused on results (Lawler & Bilson, 2010). Some common models include: transactional leadership, McGregor's X and Y theories, leader-member exchange, and competency models.

Although rational-scientific leadership models may meet the increasing requirements by funders for accountability and efficiency, they have limited applicability for human services (Lawler, 2007; O'Connor & Netting, 2009). These "command and control" approaches have several limitations, many of which are noted by Lawler and Bilson (2010, p. 14). By narrowly focusing on bureaucracy, tasks, control and results rather than process and relationships, these models reduce trust and involvement with workers and constrict their practice with clients. These models also view power and communication in leadership as positional and directed one way, excluding staff and client perspectives and diversity, which can disempower staff, further oppress marginalized clients and reduce their participation. These models also fail to consider the

complexities of social work practice and the conditions for critical reflection and learning that inform practice, focusing instead on efficiency and performance outcomes. Finally, perhaps most importantly, these leadership approaches are incompatible with the professional nature of social work practice, as noted by Hardina et al. (2007):

Traditional top-down management approaches may not fit well with a professional workforce more concerned about professional autonomy, professional standards, quality of care, and successful outcomes for clients...When applied to a well-educated and professional workforce, poor results such as poor motivation, low morale, burnout, and high staff turnover are likely to ensue. (p. 226)

In contrast, reflective pluralist leadership perspectives are based on a postmodern set of underlying assumptions: reality is socially constructed and multiple, management practice depends on the situation and context, organizations are changing, emergent and unpredictable, leadership is reflective and social-emotional, and ethics are feminist and compassionate (Lawler & Bilson, 2010, p. 26). This view of leadership corresponds to collaborative organizations that are structured on a network of relationships, a 'clan' culture, participatory decision-making and consensus, and acknowledge a diversity of perspectives and the context and complexity of situations (O'Connor & Netting, 2009, p. 207). Leadership approaches from this perspective are based on process and focus on relationships and shared participation with others; they encourage self-reflective leadership practice and a collaborative culture (Lawler & Bilson, 2010).

Participatory leadership approaches fit with a reflective pluralist perspective. There is emerging research interest in participatory approaches, context, relationships and processes given the complexity most organizations face (Grint, 2011; Parry, 2011). Schein (2010) also acknowledges this complexity, citing technological changes that require leadership as part of a

network in organizations, rather than a hierarchy. Participatory approaches are congruent with professional social work values, improve the quality, effectiveness, and satisfaction with organizational decisions and process, and can lead to meaningful change (O'Connor & Netting, 2009). Social workers are well positioned to enact this type of leadership, given their training in social work values and ethics, and their practice of relational skills such as trust, respect, honesty, and integrity (Bisman, 2004; Healy, 2002; Rank & Hutchison, 2000). However, these approaches also have limitations, as they can be time-consuming and limit action, efficiency and measurable outcomes, which can be problematic in the new managerialism context (O'Connor & Netting, 2009). As well, leaders in human service organizations may ascribe to an inclusive approach in theory and use participatory language, but in practice operate within a functionalist organizational structure by retaining control over decision-making, causing confusion and frustration for staff and clients (O'Connor & Netting, 2009).

2.3 Emerging Participatory Leadership Approaches

Participatory leadership approaches have been generally known in the literature as Participative Decision Making (PDM), defined as “actual staff involvement, whether formal or informal, direct or indirect, in decision processes regarding issues affecting the structure, funding, staffing, or programming of the organization” (Lewis et al., 2012, p. 155). It is important to note that PDM is viewed on a continuum, from lack of staff involvement to complete involvement in decision-making (Lewis et al., 2012). Participatory leadership approaches include: transformational leadership model, servant leadership model, distributed leadership concept, situational leadership theory, empowering leadership approach, feminist leadership perspective, and complexity leadership theory. Given the relevance of these emerging

leadership approaches for social work practice, they are described in more detail below, along with their common characteristics that helped to inform the current study.

The transformational leadership model is well known in the leadership literature. This model views leadership as creating significant change based on four dimensions: idealized influence (charisma), intellectual stimulation (innovative problem solving), individual consideration (respect and coaching), and inspirational motivation (vision, building confidence to act) (Diaz-Saenz, 2011). It focuses on the relationship between leaders and staff, and influence through motivation, commitment and job satisfaction (Lawler & Bilson, 2010). The principles of transformational leadership are compatible with social work values and empowerment (Fisher, 2009; Hardina et al., 2007). It also promotes innovation and a learning culture with staff, by fostering collaboration, commitment, team building and performance (Hopkins & Austin, 2004). Previous research indicates that transformational leaders can have a positive influence on staff performance, organizational culture and change (Lewis et al., 2012). A transformational leadership style in human service organizations has been correlated with successful leadership outcomes (Mary, 2005), increased social worker commitment and role clarity (Tafvelin, Hyvonen & Westerberg, 2014). The transformational leadership model is worthy of consideration as it forms the basis for participatory leadership models. However, it is limited by focusing on individual leadership characteristics and some argue that it disregards the influence of staff behaviour, situational and process variables, and the larger organizational context (Diaz-Saenz, 2011; Grint, 2011).

The servant leadership model is a less widely known and researched model that shares a view, with transformational leadership, of leadership as a relationship. Developed by Robert Greenleaf, it considers leadership integrity, ethics and moral responsibility prime, along with a

focus on workers' professional growth, team and relationships (Anand et al., 2011). In this model, leaders act as a servant to workers, sharing power and striving to reach common goals, embodying values of empathy and social justice, which correspond to social work values (Hardina et al., 2007). Research in this model is sparse but does demonstrate a positive link and mutual influence between leaders and workers (Avolio et al., 2009). However, this model has limitations as it is still focused on the individual leader and on maintaining the status quo rather than encouraging creativity and innovation (Hardina et al., 2007).

The distributed leadership concept has become popular since 2000, especially in the business, education and social science field (Bolden, 2011). The leadership function is viewed as shared among groups, an emergent process, and varies with context and expertise of members (Lawler, 2007). However, distributed leadership disregards contextual issues, such as power differentials between leaders and staff; also, research on this model needs to be more inclusive regarding ethics and diversity (Bolden, 2011).

Situational leadership theory suggests that leaders should vary their approach depending on followers' (workers) level of maturity and readiness (ability i.e. experience, knowledge and skills; and confidence) and the task situation (various circumstances) (Hersey, Blanchard & Johnson, 2007). This theory proposes four different leadership styles, with varying levels of task behaviour (direction) and relationship behaviour (support), based on followers' level of maturity and readiness: telling (directive, give instructions, for inexperienced followers); selling (convince, explain decisions, followers have some knowledge and skills); participating (build relationships, share ideas, followers have most skills and knowledge); and delegating (pass on responsibilities, workers are confident and able to work independently) (Hersey et al., 2007). The advantage of this theory is leaders' flexibility, and it works well when leaders match their style

to the appropriate level of followers' maturity: leaders should become less task focused and more relationship focused as followers mature, thereby helping followers to develop their abilities and confidence (Hersey et al., 2007).

The empowering leadership approach strives to address political and power inequities by focusing on two key dimensions: reducing power differentials and hierarchy in organizations; and increasing participation by involving staff and clients in key organizational decisions (Hardina et al., 2007). In an empowering organization, there is a true sharing of the leadership role and both workers and clients can contribute to meaningful organizational change (Shera & Page, 1995). This increased participation improves clients' leadership skills and access to quality services, and increases workers' autonomy, commitment, productivity and quality of service provision (Hardina et al., 2007). However, empowering leadership is not compatible with hierarchical, bureaucratic organizations and controlling leadership practices, which are currently dominating HSO's (Hardina et al., 2007). A principle barrier to this approach is the leadership and organizational skill deficits of managers and supervisors, who may resist sharing their power, fearing change and a perceived loss of control (Shera & Page, 1995).

The feminist perspective of leadership also strives to reduce hierarchy by promoting practices such as participatory decision-making, consensus and collaboration, rotating leadership, flexible jobs, equitable income distribution and personal and political accountability (Hardina et al., 2007; Hasenfeld, 2010b). This perspective recognizes the emotional and gendered nature of social work in human services: female staff predominate, they are primarily in direct service positions, and involved in emotional work (Hasenfeld, 2010b). While feminine principles of leadership have been identified, these principles are often devalued, even in organizations that espouse a collaborative team philosophy, while traditional masculine characteristics are valued

(Alimo-Metcalfe, 2010; Lawler & Bilson, 2010). Thus, while a feminist leadership approach emphasizes power-sharing and participatory practices, it may be difficult to enact given the gendered nature of leadership which preferences male values.

The complexity leadership theory espouses creating an adaptive organizational climate, with open information sharing, collaboration, trust and safety among leaders and staff, leading to creative and innovative ideas (Uhl Bien & Marion, 2011). This approach recognizes the dynamic, emerging and relational nature of leadership from a process perspective. It also supports reduced hierarchies, informal networks and diversity (Lawler & Bilson, 2010). This type of leadership has the potential to transform bureaucratic organizations into collaborative cultures; however, it also requires leaders who are receptive to sharing their power, which is a key issue for participatory models to be successful. Webster (2010) is a sole voice that has applied complexity theory to social work leadership on a conceptual level. He proposes a leadership framework to facilitate collaborative decision-making and power sharing with teams.

The common characteristics of leadership that arose from these participatory approaches and helped to inform the current study were: building trusting relationships and safety with staff; motivating and supporting others through being strength-based and encouraging; managing authority by empowering staff, reducing hierarchy and sharing leadership with teams; dealing with conflict through collaboration; involving staff and clients in decisions and promoting consensus; encouraging creativity, innovation, shared learning and informal networks; and considering diverse perspectives, context and complexity of situations (see Appendix A). Some of these characteristics have been studied in previous research, and a review of this research literature is provided below.

2.4 Participatory Leadership

As noted above, participatory leadership models share common characteristics, which represent the core functions of social work. These core functions include: fostering trusting relationships and upholding social work values; involving workers in decision-making and supporting teams; and influencing programs and service delivery. A review of conceptual and empirical research evidence is provided to understand the nature and extent of research on participatory leadership models, especially the empowerment model, in each of the core functions of social work practice. This review is limited, as the social work profession has been ambivalent about addressing the issue of leadership and empirical research is lacking as a result (McDonald & Chenoweth, 2009). For reference purposes, a summary of this review is provided in chart format in Appendix C. Also, a listing of each of the research studies cited is provided in chart format in Appendix D.

Trusting relationships and social work values. Trust is central to relationships between social workers and clients in human services to prevent an abuse of power (Hasenfeld, 2010b). This parallels the trust required in leader-staff relationships. Kramer (2011) upholds the centrality of trust in leadership influence, and the fragility of trust especially with workers who have less power to make decisions. Participatory and empowering leadership models, by reducing power differentials, increase trust between leaders and staff. Such trusting relationships are important in fostering an innovative, collaborative learning culture (Baldwin, 2004). Along with trust, social work values have been established for the profession (CASW, 2005), which are pivotal to guiding the moral work of human service organizations (Bisman, 2004; Hasenfeld, 2010b). Social workers are preferred as leaders in human service organizations because they are uniquely trained in social work values, which guide their decision-making (Rank & Hutchison,

2000; Healy, 2002; Bisman, 2004). Participatory models of leadership uphold these social work values by involving workers and clients in organizational decision-making (Hardina et al., 2007; Lawler, 2007).

There is research that supports the importance of social work values and ethics for leadership in human service organizations. Rank and Hutchison (2000) researched social work leadership from the perspective of deans and directors in the U.S. Five core leadership elements in social work were identified: pro-action, values and ethics, empowerment, vision, and communication. These are similar to leadership characteristics noted earlier and align with social work principles. The majority of participants endorsed differences between leadership in social work and other professions: commitment to the social work code of ethics, a systemic perspective, a participatory leadership style and a social justice focus. They also supported leadership development in social work, recognizing that it has been an overlooked area. Rank and Hutchison's findings clearly supports participatory and empowering leadership models within the context of social work values and ethics, and the need for further development in this area. There are also some limitations: the conception of leadership is narrow (executive positions), and the measurement of leadership is restricted to perceptions rather than behaviour.

Similarly, Healy (2002) interviewed social welfare managers in social service organizations in Australia. She presented findings of two core leadership themes: social justice (individual and structural), and participatory decision-making (client and worker involvement). This approach is also consistent with social work values and participant quotations highlighted the importance of relationships, trust, respect, empowerment, and a strengths-based approach in leadership. The preferred management structure "allowed for role specialization and streamlining of information flow and decision-making" (p. 532), which is important to an adaptive climate as

noted earlier (Hasenfeld, 2010a). Healy's findings provide further support for participatory leadership approaches in social work, as the leaders in this study embraced a collaborative management style, including the voices of staff and clients in organizational decisions. Healy acknowledges the study's limitations, including a lack of generalizability due to a small sample size, and she recommends more research on social work leadership.

There is also evidence that leaders have demonstrated social work values in practice using a collaborative leadership approach. In a recent U.S. study, two female leaders adopted a novel approach as co-executive leaders, sharing power and decision-making in a social service agency (Fischbach, Smerz, Findlay, Williams, & Cox, 2007). They developed their own framework to follow through discussion, consensus and trust, demonstrating feminist principles of leadership noted earlier. This approach realized many benefits, including improved decisions and staff confidence, increased trust and teamwork, and reduced stress and coverage issues. These leaders viewed themselves as "servant leaders...empowering others by modeling shared power and decision-making" (p. 34). Clearly, these leaders acted as role models and set the example for an empowering leadership approach, although this study is also limited to senior leaders.

Despite the above promising examples, there is also evidence that social work leaders are having increasing difficulty in preserving the values and ethics of the profession. Mizrahi and Berger (2005) explored the impact of the changing health care system on leadership by surveying social work leaders in U.S. hospital settings over time. Leaders were challenged to preserve the values and mission of social work in programs and services, and were being driven more by the market culture than person-centered care. As these authors reflected, "social work survival has the potential to compromise social advocacy and commitment to social justice, and it could come

at the expense of patients and their families” (p. 163). It appears that participatory leadership and social work values may be particularly impacted in hospital settings, which are traditional, large, bureaucratic settings.

Involving workers in decision-making. To embrace the social work values of empowerment and social justice, leaders in human service organizations are challenged to share their power and privilege in a meaningful way with staff (Hasenfeld, 2010b). This is due to the inherent power differential in most leadership positions within traditional, hierarchical settings. Participatory and empowering leadership models reduce organizational hierarchy, foster trust, and support the involvement of workers in decision-making, thus ensuring that the voices of workers contribute to organizational outcomes (Healy, 2002; Hasenfeld, 2010c; Shera & Page, 1995). Empowering leadership practices also increase workers’ psychological empowerment, feelings of self-confidence and autonomy, thereby increasing their motivation, commitment and productivity (Hardina et al., 2007; Shera & Page, 1995). Worker empowerment is important because this leads to shared decision-making with their clients and contributes to improved quality and effectiveness of service delivery (Hardina et al., 2007). However, this issue has been neglected in the social work field, even though “an organization’s success will largely depend on its ability to use the knowledge and experience of its own workers” (Cohen & Austin, 1997, p. 37).

Hopkins and Austin (2004) confirm that social workers may not be supported and involved in making decisions about their practice and organization. Citing their own research, these authors reveal that social workers believed their agencies would empower and respect clients much more than themselves. This is especially likely to occur in traditional, bureaucratic organizations with prescribed service delivery standards and controls, leading workers to feel

helpless, powerless, and unmotivated to perform (Cohen & Austin, 1997; Hardina et al., 2007; Shera & Page, 1995). Further, this disempowerment not only affects worker motivation and performance but also client service delivery, because when social workers feel powerless, they are less likely to adopt empowering practice with their clients (Cohen & Austin, 1997; Hardina et al., 2007). Fostering staff empowerment is therefore essential to good social work practice.

According to Hardina et al. (2007), senior leadership “has the primary responsibility for motivating employees and providing supportive leadership for staff members.” (p.30). Leaders need to adopt an “incremental and well-thought out” approach; otherwise their efforts may fail (p. 232). These authors adapted a conceptual framework by Petter et al. (2002) that identifies organizational factors, namely a supportive culture, inspirational leadership and trust, which are preconditions for staff empowerment and motivation, ultimately leading to improved organizational performance (see Figure 1 below).

Human Service Organization

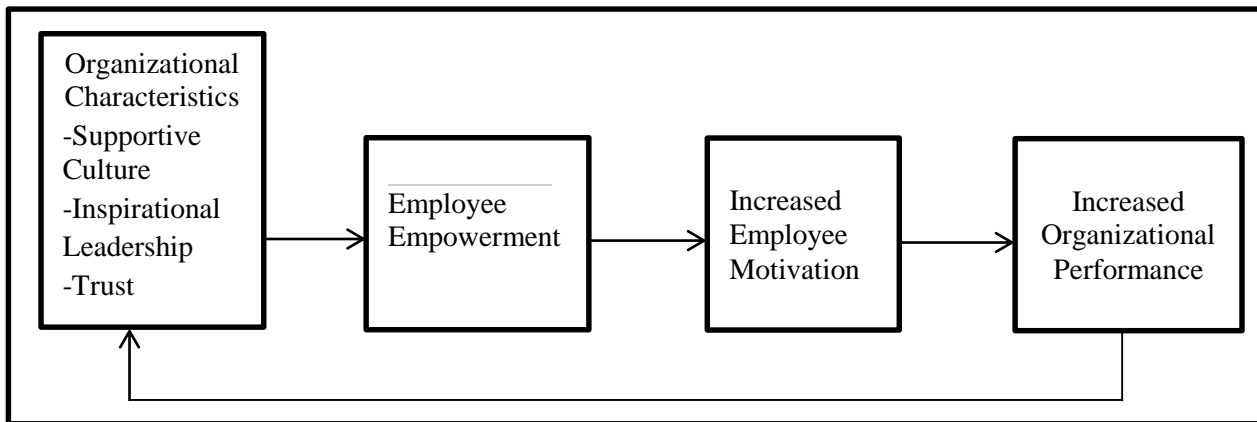


Figure 1: Theoretical Relationship between leadership, empowerment and employee motivation. [Adapted from Petter, Byrnes, Choi, Fegan & Miller, (2002) in Hardina et al., (2007)]

This model provides a conceptual link between leadership, worker empowerment and motivation, and organizational outcomes. According to Petter et al. (2002), leadership corresponds to conditions leaders need to foster in order to support an adaptive climate. Worker empowerment includes power to make decisions, control over work, creativity, knowledge and skills. Worker motivation includes satisfaction and commitment to the job, while organizational performance includes effectiveness and innovation.

A review of the conceptual and empirical research in human services indicates that leaders can facilitate staff empowerment and motivation in several ways. On an organizational level, Cohen and Austin (1997) and Shera and Page (1995) each propose leadership frameworks to empower social workers using three main principles. First, on a structural level, leaders can decentralize their hierarchy and build in formal opportunities for staff to collaborate with them, be involved in innovative solutions and shared decision-making (Cohen & Austin, 1997). Leaders can also share power during supervision, agency and team meetings, and performance evaluation (Shera & Page, 1995). This corresponds to strategies for leaders to support staff participation in organizational decision-making, by restructuring the organization to include formal decision-making roles, and making workers equal participants in order to benefit from their expertise (Bowen & Lawler, 1995; Hardina et al., 2007; Pine, Warsh & Maluccio, 1998; Petter et al., 2002; Turner & Shera, 2005). This first principle aligns with an empowering leadership approach and feminist organizational structures.

Second, on a worker level, leaders can build in social workers' participation in decision-making by providing time, rewards and skills training, encouraging them to collaborate with colleagues across the agency to solve problems and improve service (Cohen & Austin, 1997). Leaders can support workers' involvement using a strengths-based approach, recognition and

professional development (Shera & Page, 1995). This parallels strategies for leaders to support social workers' involvement in program design and evaluation, advocacy for service delivery improvements, and provide rewards for positive performance (Bowen & Lawler, 1995; Guitierrez, GlenMaye & DeLois, 1995; Hardina et al., 2007; Turner & Shera, 2005). This second principle aligns with complexity leadership theory and an adaptive climate.

Third, on a learning/technology level, leaders can create opportunities for both individual and organizational learning, by encouraging discussion across agency levels, providing time away for reflection, reviewing data, and promoting action research (Cohen & Austin, 1997). Technology advancement can occur through reviewing research, evaluation, data and professional literature (Shera & Page, 1995). This aligns with strategies for leaders to provide adequate information (data), technology (research), training to develop knowledge and skills, power to make decisions, and a learning culture for social workers to make informed decisions and demonstrate creativity and initiative (Bowen & Lawler, 1995; Hardina et al., 2007; Petter et al., 2002; Turner & Shera, 2005). This third principle aligns with the development of innovation and a collaborative learning culture.

On an individual level, leaders can also encourage staff involvement in decision-making. First, leaders can give social workers more independence and control over their work, allowing them to problem-solve issues, be responsible and track their own performance (Bowen & Lawler, 1995; Guitierrez et al., 1995; Hardina et al., 2007; Petter et al., 2002). Hardina (2011) cited multiple research studies that workers feel empowered when they have control over their work. Second, leaders can also model a participatory approach, ensuring that social workers are respected and involved in changes to develop a learning culture (Guitierrez et al.; Hopkins & Austin, 2004; Turner & Shera, 2005). Shera and Page (1995) cited multiple research studies

indicating significant benefits for staff with this approach including: improved motivation, commitment, autonomy, and stress tolerance on an organizational level, along with greater attendance, satisfaction, trust, positive attitude towards clients, learning and advancement on a worker level. While much of this research is dated, clearly there are many benefits for social workers, and in turn for clients, when leaders adopt this approach.

There is research evidence that leaders are using participatory approaches to foster workers' empowerment in human services. Hardina (2011) conducted a recent national U.S. study, which indicated that the majority of leaders in social service organizations use participatory leadership approaches that empower staff. However, these findings were restricted to self-report usage of leadership models and practice activities and did not include worker input. Similarly, a recent quantitative study by Wallach and Mueller (2006) found that participatory decision-making at the team and organizational level was among the factors accounting for staff empowerment. Leaders were encouraged to use participatory leadership practices that align with feminist principles. Finally, an earlier exploratory qualitative study by Gutierrez et al. (1995) found that leaders who supported workers and modeled empowerment, encouraged training and new program development, reinforced positive behaviour and provided flexibility in job scheduling fostered worker empowerment.

There are also earlier case examples of participatory leadership being used to empower workers in human services. Cohen and Austin (1997) presented two case examples in the U.S. where features of their above framework were implemented. In a child welfare context, leaders influenced worker involvement and participation across different agency sections, which improved service coordination. In a mental health and social service context, leaders supported workers to develop and submit innovative proposals for service improvements, which were

successfully funded through small grants. In both cases, worker participation was formally sanctioned as part of their role and learning occurred through a collaborative team process. Pine, Warsh and Maluccio (1998) also provided a case example of a child welfare agency in the U.S. using a participatory leadership approach with staff and community to improve the agency's performance. There were many benefits such as increased worker commitment, knowledge and skills, and improved connection with staff and community agencies. They successfully used several leadership strategies similar to those discussed above. While these cases are examples of participatory leadership approaches, these authors acknowledge their framework is not widespread and they recommend further action research to implement these principles.

Supporting teams. Fostering psychological empowerment and autonomy of social workers within a team context is increasingly important for leadership, as it contributes to collective organizational outcomes. As Hopkins and Austin (2004) explain: "In an era of more empowered work groups or teams, individual performance will also be evaluated by the work group's collective performance" (p. 5). Encouraging a collaborative team culture is also pivotal to developing a learning culture and supporting innovative practices, according to these authors. Leadership support is a critical factor for team empowerment to be successful. Leaders need to provide teams with support, resources, information, and training in group process, goal setting and evaluation, interpersonal skills and collaboration (Hardina et al., 2007). Specific strategies for leaders to empower teams include: sharing authority during agency meetings, engaging in team-based problem-solving and decision-making, and improving morale and motivation through recognition, rewards and a positive team climate (Shera & Page, 1995).

In a team-based empowerment approach, Hardina et al. (2007) explain, power is shifted to lower levels of workers, who are given more latitude to make decisions and be responsible for

the results. In this flatter structure, team members must assume some responsibility for leadership. Teams are more likely to feel empowered and competent if leadership sets the standard and supports the team to manage themselves and be responsible for results, “solving their own problems, taking on all responsibility for the delivery of some types of integrated services, and hiring, disciplining and training new members” (p. 256). This type of team structure is often referred to as a “self-directed team” and it is one way to encourage an empowering organizational structure (p. 231). This corresponds to the idea of encouraging self-evaluation and self-management among team members (Shera & Page, 1995). There are many benefits for staff, clients and the organization when teams are empowered as a collective group. Research in the business sector, cited by Hardina et al. (2007), demonstrates that team members feel more psychologically empowered and committed to the organization, which raises their productivity. They also demonstrate more initiative and improved client service when provided with leadership support, rewards for positive performance and access to information. In a human services context, leaders’ sharing of information and power through a collaborative team approach has been found to empower staff (Guiterrez et al., 1995). Leadership support of collaborative problem-solving across teams has also been effective in improving relationships and service coordination within child welfare agencies (Cohen & Austin, 1997). In a more recent study, Wallach and Mueller (2006) found that collaborative peer relationships were among the factors that accounted for staff empowerment and leaders were encouraged to promote participatory team processes.

There are also limitations to a team-based empowerment approach. Leaders can be a barrier, if they retain control over decision-making, or provide insufficient support, information, resources and reinforcement for positive performance (Hardina et al., 2007). Lawler and Bilson

(2010) cite mixed results for teams in terms of improved client service delivery, positive worker climate, and organizational cost efficiency. These authors caution that teams are complex, represent diverse perspectives, and need to reflect on their processes.

Programs and Service Delivery. According to Hardina et al. (2007), empowering leadership also encourages workers to advocate for improvements in organizational policies, service delivery and evaluation. There are ways for leaders to encourage worker participation in programs and service delivery, by developing, monitoring and evaluating service quality and outcomes. Leaders can also employ service technologies, such as research on evidence-informed practices, professional development opportunities for workers, and computer technology for data management and learning (Shera & Page, 1995). As well, leaders can engage the broader systems, through fundraising, public relations campaigns, advocacy for social justice, community research and support (Turner & Shera, 2005).

Packard et al. (2008) explored effective leadership strategies and processes in preserving worker morale, productivity and program quality during budget restraints in multiple U.S. human service agencies. A key finding was that “engaged, visible and collaborative leadership emerged as an absolute precondition for effective management of the budget challenges” (p. 72). This leadership approach included collaborative problem-solving, decentralized decision-making, and involving workers in creating solutions around program priorities and efficiencies. By valuing staff ideas, these leaders increased worker support for budget decisions, built staff and management leadership capacities, developed more creative solutions and increased staff productivity. It appears that leaders in these agencies clearly aligned with participatory leadership approaches by supporting their workers to exhibit leadership capacities and contribute meaningfully to decision-making. Collaborative leadership practices and skills also appear to be

a buffer during challenging circumstances, which is important given the current environment human service organizations are facing. These authors acknowledged the limitations of this study, as supervisor, worker and client perspectives were not included and further research in other organizational settings was recommended.

From another perspective, Mizrahi and Berger (2005) explored the impact of the changing health care system on leadership by surveying social work leaders in U.S. hospital settings over time. Contrary to the above study, they found that social work leaders held increasingly negative attitudes, and functioned more as transactional leaders, as they were challenged with professional survival and system reorganization within a market culture. These leaders had reduced influence in creating new social work programs and services, along with increased pressure for services, budgetary reductions and devaluation of the social work role. Many sacrificed programs and services, even though innovation and creativity was essential to adapt the social work hospital role in changing circumstances. It appears in this study that leaders were constrained by macro institutional factors and were less able to collaboratively involve staff in creative solutions. Further research was recommended by these authors to understand the leadership skills and strategies needed to balance competing priorities and develop coping mechanisms, given the complexity and rapid changes in human services.

Summary of literature review. There are several salient points from the above literature review worth noting. First, there is evidence that a trusting and respectful relationship between leaders and staff is not only fundamental, but fosters empowerment between workers and clients, and contributes to a collaborative learning culture. There is also evidence that leaders uphold social work values of social justice and empowerment, and embrace participatory and empowering leadership approaches, although some are constrained by the real threat of new

managerialism. The question of whether leaders can foster trusting relationships in the current market culture was therefore included in this research study. Second, there are multiple models and strategies for leadership to foster the conditions for worker empowerment in human service organizations. There are also many benefits to be realized on a worker, service and organizational level. While there is research evidence of these approaches being used in human services, most is dated and further research is recommended. The current research study is designed to explore what leadership practices are currently being used, including the extent of a participatory leadership approach. Third, while there has been much research on teams in general, it is not clear to what extent leaders are promoting empowering team approaches, such as reducing hierarchies and encouraging a self-directed team concept with social workers. There is also more to be learned about how teams can reflect on their process and foster the collaborative learning culture required for innovation. Teamwork was included as a research area in the current study for this reason. Fourth, it appears that there are mixed results for leaders using the above strategies to preserve programs and services in the current market culture. Some leaders used a participatory, collaborative approach, decentralized decision-making and data to involve workers and the community in decisions while other leaders appeared constrained based on declining resources and pressures. Both researchers did not involve supervisors, workers or clients in feedback, which suggests that more inclusive research is warranted in this area. The current study extended this input, by including supervisors in the research.

2.5 Collaborative Learning Culture and Participatory Leadership

The foregoing research review on participatory leadership leads to a more focused discussion about its connection with collaborative learning cultures. According to Hopkins and Austin (2004), “to meet the challenges of today’s human service industry, agencies need to

balance effectiveness, efficiency and innovation, as well as engaging in interdisciplinary, culturally competent and self-reflective practice.” (p.4) In a collaborative learning culture, workers are encouraged to gather new information, experiment with incorporating new ideas into their daily practice, reflect and learn from them, and share their knowledge with one another in a safe learning environment. Spreading this knowledge to others and using it to inform new, innovative practice and service delivery leads to the development of a learning organization (Hopkins & Austin, 2004). Baldwin (2004) explains that learning organizations that foster innovation have less hierarchical structures, networks of relationships, critical reflection and learning. Participatory leadership processes nurture these networks of relationships and encourage reflective social work practice, but they need to be embedded in the organization to achieve broad learning. The specific characteristics of this type of organizational culture include: a commitment by senior leadership to learning and innovation; a safe learning environment where mistakes are viewed as learning; opportunities for staff to develop and implement new services and programs; informal networks for staff to reflect and share their learning with one another; and evidence of improved organizational outcomes.

As Hopkins and Austin explain (2004), traditional, bureaucratic organizations can realize many benefits by transforming from a culture of control to a learning culture that values staff ideas and contributions. A supportive learning culture has been linked to improved worker independence, well-being, team building and support, leading to better learning and problem solving. Clients experience a parallel process with improved quality of service and outcomes. The organization also benefits by improving worker retention and outcomes. Leadership plays a pivotal role in developing a collaborative learning culture: “This type of leadership requires an ability to create a supportive, collaborative and empowering organizational climate that fosters

learning, problem solving, risk taking, and innovation” (p. 8). Leaders can foster this type of culture by providing workers with learning opportunities to encourage divergent thinking, supporting dissenting perspectives, facilitating learning through questioning, developing an openness to new ideas, being aware of their own biases, and demonstrating humility (Austin & Hopkins, 2004). This approach requires that leaders develop qualities of self-awareness and critical reflection, which may be a limiting factor as not all leaders are open or able to develop these qualities.

Above all, a safe and secure climate is essential for workers to feel comfortable in engaging in open, honest dialogue, and leaders are the primary influencers for creating these conditions. However, learning at the organizational level only occurs when leaders act as role models and set the example, becoming involved in the learning process with others (Austin & Hopkins, 2004). Coaching, mentoring and supporting staff along with involving them in decision-making and problem-solving are critical to promote a learning culture throughout the organization (Austin & Hopkins, 2004). Paying attention to the needs of staff is important for leaders, as case studies demonstrate that learning usually begins at the individual and team levels and then expands to the rest of the organization. However, unless workers are empowered to participate in organizational decision-making, they may not be able to influence the organization with their creative ideas (Baldwin, 2004; Hopkins & Austin, 2004).

There are also legitimate threats, Baldwin (2004) cautions, to the practice of critical reflection and learning by social workers. New managerialism preferences managers’ knowledge and control using performance targets rather than worker and client knowledge developed through a reflective approach. Also, evidence-based practice focuses on standard intervention methods instead of an incremental, practice-informed approach based on workers’ and clients’

experiences. Finally, formal evaluation measures that focus on outcomes reduce the evolving possibilities for change gained through process evaluation. These threats conflict with the networks of relationships needed for critical reflection in learning organizations, reduce participants' involvement and commitment to change, and destroy emergent possibilities for innovation. Drumm (2012) reinforces these concerns, noting that most HSO's have a hierarchical culture, are concerned with political realities, and are reactive rather than responsive to market changes and innovation. Trying to shift this culture requires transformational change; leadership vision, commitment and skill are fundamental to creating this shift. However, there are limitations to leaders' influence on culture, including short term budgets, a hierarchical culture, and a lack of leadership skills around change, which is the current reality for many HSO's (Drumm, 2012). Thus, while a more flexible innovative culture is favoured in HSO's, this may be challenging to enact in the present context.

It is unclear to what extent a collaborative learning culture is currently being fostered by leaders in human service organizations. A collaborative leadership approach that ensures safety along with entrepreneurial support has been found to encourage social workers' risk-taking and development of new programs in human services (Gutierrez et al., 1995). Moreover, leadership commitment was critical to supporting client and staff reflection, evaluation, feedback, and creativity in human services (Bartle et al., 2002). Within child welfare and juvenile justice systems in the U.S., collaborative leadership, participatory decision-making with teams, and opportunities for innovation are significantly related to a positive organizational climate and reduced staff turnover (Glisson, Dukes, & Green, 2006). In contrast, transformational leadership in developmental services was found to be strongly related to organizational values and cultural

consensus but inversely related to innovation, prompting one author to suggest that leaders need to create a culture that values risk-taking and innovation, as noted earlier (Jaskyte, 2004).

There is also research evidence that staff opportunities for critical reflection, learning and participation in social work practice and supervision are in decline within human service organizations. According to Hopkins and Austin (2004), multiple research studies demonstrate a lack of staff participation and involvement in agency and practice decisions, as well as a belief by workers in their agencies valuing client empowerment over staff empowerment. This is ironic, these authors note, as an empowerment approach is meant to encourage client participation and involvement in decisions and the best way to promote this is by empowering staff. Similarly, Baldwin's (2004) research found that social workers did not have a supportive team context to reflect on their practice, had policies and procedures imposed upon them, and had managers who viewed supervision and team discussion as tools for control rather than opportunities to learn. This type of organizational culture, he notes, discourages innovation and creativity, reduces individual, team and organizational learning, and does not promote an adaptive learning culture. A collaborative learning culture may conflict with the current focus on efficiency and accountability. Staff development and building knowledge has been impeded by funding shortages and a focus on organizational survival in some human services (Barnoff et al., 2006). There has also been an increased focus on evidence-based management approaches in human services in response to governmental demands for accountability and organizational performance. These positivist leadership approaches conflict with the emergent nature of innovation and ignore contextual factors such as relationships, cultural diversity and client input (Briggs & McBeath, 2009).

The above review demonstrates some evidence of a collaborative learning culture in human services. It appears that, despite some promising examples, further progress is needed before a collaborative learning culture is widely adopted. This progress is impeded by the current focus on new managerialism and controlling leadership practices that resist such development. Also, measuring the extent of an adaptive culture that encourages innovation and-risk taking may be challenging, as it is a complex concept (Foster & Meinhard, 2002). More research is warranted to explore the extent that a collaborative learning culture is occurring in human services and that leaders are promoting such learning in their organizations. This need provided support for including organizational culture in the current study.

2.6 Organizational Culture and Connection to Leadership

Given the breadth of literature on organizational culture, this review is limited to its definition, characteristics, connection with leadership, and conceptual framework. According to Schein (2010, p. 2), culture can occur at various levels, including macro, organizational, occupational and micro levels. Organizational culture includes private, public, non-profit and government organizations; public organizations were the focus of this study. Culture is both a dynamic process that is created through interaction with others and a stabilizing force on social order with prescribed rules for behaviour. Culture is defined as an abstract concept that is observable in behaviour; it includes the underlying shared values, beliefs and assumptions that influence how members think, feel and behave. Observable elements include: language and customs; group norms, values, principles and unwritten rules; feeling/climate and shared meanings through interactions; shared group skills and thinking; symbols, rituals and celebrations (p. 14-16).

Schein (2010) also explains that culture has underlying characteristics: it brings structure, stability and meaning to organizational processes, which ensure its survival, but also makes change challenging; it has depth and is often intangible; it has breadth and is pervasive, impacting all areas of organizational functioning; and it strives toward integrating the observable elements noted above. The strength of organizational culture depends on its length, the stability of group members, and the emotional intensity of shared history. For example, major changes in leadership, mission and vision, technology, or groups will impact cultural cohesion. Still, once a culture is formed, it acts as a method of socialization for new members, by teaching them about shared underlying values and assumptions. As well, Schein emphasizes that learning and adaptation to both the external and internal environment is part of organizational culture.

There is a strong link between leadership practice, organizational culture and effective organizational functioning. Organizational culture is considered central to organizational effectiveness and functioning, and leaders are key players in establishing the culture within their agencies (Lewis et al., 2012). The congruency between leadership practice and organizational culture is therefore essential for organizations to function effectively (O'Connor & Netting, 2009). Schein (2010) argues that leadership and culture are “fundamentally intertwined” (p. xi). He proposes three main tenets that highlight this reciprocal influence. First, leaders influence culture through their values and behaviour, setting the tone by embedding the culture in the organization. This includes: what they pay attention to consistently, reward, and respond to emotionally; how they react to crises and critical incidents; how they allocate resources and rewards; their role modelling, teaching and coaching; and how they promote and discipline others (p. 236). Second, leaders are shaped by organizational culture, which provides structure and meaning to participants but also constrains leadership practice. However, cultural influence

occurs only if consistent with leaders' primary influence; otherwise it may be ignored by others. This influence includes: design and structure; systems and procedures; symbolic rituals; physical space; stories about people and events; and formal statements of organizational values (p. 236). Third, when organizational culture becomes dysfunctional, leaders are required to respond rapidly to this by prompting a change process for organizational survival. The common cultural elements that arose from this review and helped to shape the current study were on two levels (see Appendix A). On an individual level, leadership influence on culture included: role modelling of behaviour, response to change, reaction to mistakes, promotion and discipline of others, sharing information and responding to feedback. On an organizational level, cultural influence included: mission, vision and values; organizational structure; decision-making processes; change management processes; and support for a learning culture.

According to Schein (2010), leaders also have multiple tasks around managing subcultures, helping the organization to learn and adapt to the external environment, and fostering internal integration. Different subcultures can exist within the same organization. Staff subculture focuses on work completion, thrives on effective communication, trust and teamwork, and is slowed down by rules and hierarchy. In contrast, senior management subculture focuses on financial survival and responding to stakeholders, faces increasing responsibility and accountability, maintains control through hierarchy, and manages systems rather than people. These subcultures may work at cross purposes, which cause conflict, and the leaders' role is to bring them together around shared goals. Organizations also need to effectively adapt to their external environment. This occurs by developing a shared understanding of their core mission, concrete goals, means to achieve their mission, measure their results, and problem-solve corrective strategies (p. 74). When subgroups disagree on these tasks, conflict ensues that can

reflect different underlying values and reduce performance. Leaders play a critical role in achieving group consensus and successfully managing these issues. At the same time, leaders need to foster internal integration in organizations, which centers on group and interpersonal processes. These include creating a common language for communication, defining group boundaries and identity, distributing power, authority and status, developing norms around relationships such as trust and intimacy, defining and distributing rewards and consequences, and explaining uncontrollable events (p. 94).

Given the above focus on competing values and the need for leaders to foster adaptation to external and internal processes, it is helpful to incorporate a framework about this. Cameron and Quinn (2006) developed a 'competing values' framework of organizational culture, which recognizes that culture can vary along two dimensions: an internal focus-integration or external focus-differentiation dimension, and a stability-control or flexibility-adaptability dimension (see Appendix E). Conflict arises when there is a clash in cultures, based on different underlying values. The four cultures include: hierarchy culture, which has formal rules and procedures and is focused on internal control and stability (this corresponds to rational scientific leadership models and bureaucratic organizations); clan culture, which has a family atmosphere and is focused internally on teamwork and consensus (this corresponds to reflective pluralist leadership approaches and collaborative organizations); adhocracy culture, which is entrepreneurial and is focused externally on flexibility, risk taking and innovation (this corresponds to complexity leadership theory); and market culture, which is results based and is focused externally on competition and customer service (this corresponds to business management approaches).

2.7 Summary

In summary, previous research provides evidence of participatory leadership practices in each of the core functions of social work practice with benefits on a worker, team, service and organizational level. There were also some promising examples of emergent processes and shared leadership with staff to foster creativity, innovation and a collaborative learning culture. Despite these promising examples, there is also evidence that participatory leadership approaches are impeded by bureaucratic organizational structures, controlling leadership practices, and constraints imposed by new managerialism. Further research is warranted to discover the extent to which leaders are fostering a participatory leadership approach and a collaborative learning culture in the current market culture. This need provided impetus for the current research study. There is also evidence supporting the interaction between leadership and organizational culture. Thus, the ways these elements influenced one another were the focus of the current study. Having reviewed the conceptual and research foundations for this study, the next chapter will provide an overview of the methodology undertaken in the study.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter provides an overview of the methodology of the research study, including the research design, data collection and data analysis. These areas are important to understand how the major findings were produced. The research design overview presents the specific research questions that were followed and explains why a qualitative research approach, multiple case study and multi-method design were most suitable for examining leadership in human service organizations. The data collection overview describes several areas in detail: how the agencies were recruited and selected; when data were collected and the multiple methods used; how participant demographics were collected; the research ethics approval process and the informed consent statement used; my role and previous experience as a researcher; how data was transcribed and coded; how participants' anonymity and confidentiality were protected; and how potentially identifying quotes were checked with the participants. This leads to the final area, explaining how the data was analyzed using thematic analysis to develop emerging key themes; the preparation of extensive written reports and presentations of findings for each agency; the research standards and evaluation criteria that were followed; and the limitations of the study.

3.1 Research Design

Research questions. The purpose of this research study was to explore how leaders were understanding and practicing leadership and how their leadership practice influenced, and was shaped by, organizational culture. The specific research questions included:

- How do leaders understand and practice leadership? (i.e. what is their actual vs. preferred approach, to what extent does it reflect leadership practices recommended by the literature?)

- How do leaders perceive their practice influencing the organizational culture? (i.e. what kind of organizational culture are leaders trying to cultivate through their leadership?).
- How do leaders perceive the organizational culture influencing their leadership practice? (i.e. to what extent is their practice constrained/supported by organizational factors?)
- What factors facilitate or hinder desired leadership practices and organizational processes? (individual factors such as leaders' training and knowledge, organizational factors such as structure and culture, and external contextual factors such as funding restraints and ministry directions).

The main question about leadership was general in nature, to facilitate an open discussion of leadership approaches. A follow-up question about a participatory leadership approach was also included, (i.e. noting that this approach is considered ideal in the literature and asking participants for their opinion on this approach), given the benefits of this approach and possible constraints in the current context.

Research approach. This study employed a qualitative research approach, which is an interpretive, emergent approach that focuses on the meaning participants give to their experiences in natural settings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Qualitative approaches to leadership are now being recommended to examine relational processes in context and provide more in-depth understanding (Parry, 2011). By using a qualitative approach, as suggested by Guba and Lincoln (1988), there was recognition that: participants' conceptions and practice of leadership were subjective and multiple, a collaborative approach with participants in agencies was necessary, the values of both myself and participants needed to be acknowledged, it was acceptable to adopt a personal narrative voice, and the methodology suggested inductive logic and an emergent design, where meaning emerges from the data.

Research design. A multiple case study and multi-method design were used. The inclusion of multiple cases and methods of data collection provided rich data to analyze and compare to existing literature. Case study allows for ‘context-dependent knowledge’ which is appropriate for social science research (Flyvbjerg, 2011, p. 302). A case study approach is best suited for studying complex issues in a real life context where the boundaries are unclear and multiple methods are required (Yin, 2009). This approach was appropriate for this study given the exploratory nature of the research questions, the complexity of the leadership topic, and the practice context of children’s mental health and child welfare. Multiple case study design also allows for a comparative analysis by studying issues in different agency contexts and identifying patterns and variations across contexts (Campbell 2010; Flyvbjerg, 2011; Yin, 2009). Child welfare and children’s mental health agencies were selected because of the current challenges they are facing in their external environment and given my knowledge and familiarity with their context. The inclusion of these agencies provided contextual variations related to: mandated (child welfare) versus voluntary (children’s mental health) services, the impact of ministry expectations around transformation and accountability requirements, current agency funding and service constraints, community involvement and relationships, organizational structure and culture.

A multi-method design was also employed, using multiple qualitative methods. Using multiple methods of data collection is considered wise given the organizational and political challenges that can arise in research (Greene, Caracelli & Graham, 1989). These methods included individual interviews and observations with directors, to explore their leadership conception and practice. Focus groups and questionnaires were also conducted with supervisors, along with extensive document review. Schein (2010), a leader in organizational culture studies,

subscribes to an approach that blends academic literature, observation, and lived experience: “for academic knowledge to be useful, it must illuminate experience and provide explanations for what we observe that puzzles or excites us” (p. 2). Observations and interviews with participants who have history with the agency is also important, to uncover the deeper shared assumptions of organizational culture. As Schein explains, it is important to go beyond a behavioural approach, as participants’ behaviour is impacted by culture and situational variables in the external context.

3.2 Data Collection

Agency recruitment and selection. The criteria for sampling included a mix of convenience and purposive sampling (Rubin & Babbie, 2011). In terms of convenience sampling, during the fall of 2013, the executive directors in two child welfare agencies that I had a pre-existing professional relationship with were approached about this research project. Both agencies were initially interested in participating but they were being negatively impacted by funding cutbacks and staff layoffs, which delayed the start of the research project. While agency #1 agreed to participate, the second agency declined based on external pressures. There was also purposive sampling. For child welfare, an email was sent to PART (Practice and Research Together), informing them of the opportunity for child welfare agencies across the province to participate in this research study; no further agencies expressed interest. For children’s mental health, an email explaining the research study and inviting agencies to participate was sent province wide via Children’s Mental Health Ontario (CMHO). The executive directors in five children’s mental agencies responded by email indicating initial interest. They were sent the Summary of Research Proposal (Appendix F), outlining the purpose and focus of the study, proposed agency involvement and benefits of participation, and timeframe for completion. Two agencies (agency #2 and #3) followed up their initial inquiry, confirming their interest.

On-site meetings were subsequently held with the directors from each of these agencies during fall 2013 to screen them for inclusion (See Appendix G, Agency Screening Checklist). The purpose of these meetings was to: present an overview of the research study purpose and methods, confirm the agency's interest in participating, review confidentiality, ethics and benefits of participating, and discuss the timeline for data collection. Negotiating what is needed from the research study and what can be offered in return is an important consideration in gaining entry to an organization (Schein, 2010). The selection criteria for the study were: interest and commitment to learning about leadership practices, interest or beginning practice in participatory leadership and/or collaborative culture, ability to meet the timeline for data collection, agreement with the chosen research methods, willingness to include supervisor participation, and agreement that findings could be shared through conference presentations, professional associations, teaching, and publication. The directors in all three agencies indicated interest in participating and met the criteria for inclusion. This was important because the best data about leadership and organization culture emanates from participants who feel they are being helped in some way (Schein, 2010). The study was limited to three agencies because of the complexity of the topic, the volume of information collected, and the work involved in gathering and analyzing data (Yin, 2009).

Schedule and methods. Data collection occurred between March-May 2014, depending on the agency's availability (see Appendix H for schedule). Initial meetings were scheduled with the senior management and supervisory teams separately at each agency to review the research questions and data collection methods, obtain informed written consent, answer questions, and schedule individual interviews and focus groups. The methods for gathering data were varied and multiple, to provide rich information for data analysis as per qualitative research, as suggested by

Creswell (2007) and McCracken (1988), along with triangulation of information, as per case study design (Yin, 2009). Data collection methods included individual interviews with directors, focus groups with supervisors, supervisors' questionnaires, observations of agency meetings, and extensive document review, as described below. Written guides were also developed for each method. The details of data collection for each agency are provided in Appendix I.

The individual interviews were semi-structured, audiotaped, face-to-face meetings with directors. They had prepared questions for each main topic area, and probes to explore these areas further (See Appendix J, Interview Guide). The prepared questions ensured consistency and allowed for comparison of responses across participants, while the probes elicited more detail including their unique experiences, as noted by Barlow, (2010). Interacting with participants through semi-structured interviews is helpful to interpret organizational culture (Schein, 2010). The focus groups were audiotaped with supervisors. They also had prepared questions for each main topic area, and probes to explore these areas further (See Appendix K, Focus Group Guide). Participants were ensured of confidentiality and encouraged to be honest in their comments; this was important to ensure accuracy of information, as suggested by Schein (2010). The supervisor questionnaires were emailed to supervisors to complete in advance of the focus group. They included a summary of the focus group questions (see Appendix L, Supervisor Questionnaire). The purpose was to provide supervisors with a confidential process to share their experiences, before they were influenced by the group discussion. Both Barlow (2010) and McCracken (1988) uphold this rationale.

Observations of agency meetings focused on organizational structure, culture, worker and client involvement and macro context. They were recorded using an Observation Guide (see Appendix M), which structured the type of data gathered, and ensured accuracy and reliability of

data collection, as noted by Patton (2002). The observations of agency meetings provided reliable, direct information about leaders' everyday practice in a real-life context, as suggested by McCracken (1988). The document review included background documents common to all three agencies as well as unique reports. Information was collected following a Document Review Guide (see Appendix N) about each agency's demographics, organizational culture, structure and other aspects. These documents were used as "authentic (formal) records" and complementary tools to understand each agency's context (Olson, 2010, p. 3). Factual information about organizational culture can be gathered through such demographic methods (Schein, 2010). Individual meetings with executive directors were held to follow-up questions arising from observations and document review; this included informal consultations with some directors. Asking questions about puzzling observations and inconsistencies provides deeper insight about organizational culture, and this is best learned through interaction with participants (Schein, 2010).

The categories and specific questions for the written guides were developed from the literature review on leadership and organizational culture, as suggested by McCracken (1988), as well as the research questions. These guides assisted me to navigate the direction of discussion and observations with participants, to ensure that pertinent topical areas were covered. The specific questions evolved during data collection, as per the emergent design of qualitative research (Creswell, 2007). For example, the reciprocal nature of leadership influence and organizational culture became evident during discussion with participants, such that some questions overlapped. As noted by McCracken (1988), while the literature review informed these questions, there was unexpected information that arose from the data, such as the heavy influence of the external context on agency viability.

Participant demographics. Each participant was requested to complete a ‘participant demographic’ sheet (see Appendix O). To protect the anonymity of participants, a collective summary of the participant demographics for all three agencies was developed (see Appendix P). Overall, there were 41 participants, including 14 directors and 27 supervisors. The majority were female, and most identified as Canadian/Caucasian. Most directors were in the 50-60 age range and had bachelor or master’s level social service education. Most supervisors were in the 40-50 age range; some had social service diplomas, and there was an even split between undergraduate and graduate degrees. Most directors were relatively new to their positions, some were long-term, and most had previous management experience. Supervisors were divided between being relatively new versus being experienced in their positions and most also had previous direct service experience.

Research Ethics approval, informed consent statement. This study was approved by the Research Ethics Board (REB) at Wilfrid Laurier University. The REB was consulted about a potential conflict of interest with agency #1. The REB confirmed the research could proceed as long as participants had full disclosure of my connection with the agency and voluntarily chose to participate. This issue did not appear to be significant. At the beginning of a focus group, one supervisor mentioned this potential conflict, but with my reassurance of confidentiality the participants seemed to relax and freely engage in discussion. This study also included an Informed Consent Statement (see Appendix Q, version A and version B conflict of interest). This statement included: purpose of study, research methods, risks and benefits, voluntary participation, confidentiality of information, anonymity of identity, review of identifying quotations, conflict of interest, dissemination of results and contact information. The details of the informed consent statement were reviewed with each director and supervisor group prior to

data collection, and each participant was provided a copy to review and sign as per the REB guidelines. Participants were assured that their identity would remain anonymous and their information would remain confidential, while retaining rich description of the context and findings, as suggested by Wallace (2010). The risks (limited confidentiality in focus groups), benefits (agency report and presentation), conflict of interest (agency #1), dissemination of information (conferences and publication), and contact information were also discussed.

Researcher role and experience. My role was a central instrument in collecting this data, as part of qualitative research (Creswell, 2007). I was aware of my own position and influence, having worked as a supervisor and worker in children's mental health services for the past twenty years. This past experience helped to establish trust and credibility with the participants (Pauly, 2010). As suggested by Creswell (2007), I also established trust and rapport with each participant through an accepting stance, reassurance that their information was valuable and confidential, ensuring that their multiple voices were reflected in the findings, and following the guidelines set out by the WLU Research Ethics Board. I consistently followed the questions in the research guides and used the probes for further clarification. I engaged in critical reflexivity during each step of the research process, through journaling and discussion with my advisor. This included my personal and professional reflections, as well as methodological notes. To collect the data, I also needed to be familiar with multiple methods of data collection (Yin, 2009). My previous doctoral research experience and multiple research courses aptly prepared me for these tasks. During a research project with fellow doctoral students, I developed experience conducting semi-structured interviews, manual data transcription, thematic data analysis, report writing and editing. Similarly, through my previous work in children's mental

health service, I developed experience conducting observations, focus groups and analyzing agency documents.

Data transcription and coding. All audiotaped interviews and focus groups (23 in total, 4 interviews had 2 parts) were initially transcribed as a rough draft with the limited aid of a computer program (Dragon Speaking). I then manually reviewed and corrected each of these rough drafts while listening to the audiotape, to produce edited transcripts. During this process, I summarized the main thoughts into statements under each area, highlighted important quotes, and condensed the summarized statements at the end, to produce beginning themes for each participant. I also noted strengths and issues for consideration. This step corresponded to the first phase of thematic analysis, by familiarizing myself with the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Data transcription occurred over a 3 month period, with an average of 16 hours per transcript.

A coding system was developed for the dissertation. Agencies were coded (as 1, 2 or 3) based on their order of responding to the invitation to participate in the study. Participant quotes were numerically coded to present a cross-section of findings across the three agencies (see Appendix R for coding system). This coding system specified each agency and participant in numerical sequence (e.g. Agency 1, Director 1=A1D1; Agency 1, Focus Group 1=A1FG1, Agency 1, Supervisors' Questionnaire=A1SQ etc.). Coding quotes using a numbering system helps to maintain continuity in reporting (Corden & Sainsbury, 2006).

Protection of anonymity and confidentiality, member checking, and selection of quotes. To protect participants' anonymity, identifying information was removed, generic position titles (director, supervisor) were used, agencies and participant quotes were coded, and participant demographics were described by group. Their confidentiality was maintained by not disclosing who participated, requesting that focus group participants maintain confidentiality, requesting

participant permission to use identifying quotes, and securely storing all data collected. Pursuant to the informed consent statement, potentially identifying quotes were sent by email individually to each director, and collectively to each supervisor group, for review and editing. Asking participants to review the accuracy of quotes is part of member checking (Corden & Sainsbury, 2006; Rubin & Babbie, 2011). The selection of quotes was to demonstrate how my findings emerged from the data and to provide evidence of my data analysis and interpretations, as suggested by Corden and Sainsbury (2006).

There was a differential response to these quotes in each agency. In agency #2, there was a significant affirmative response to potentially identifying quotes. All four directors and five supervisors responded positively, were comfortable being identified in the report, and requested only minor edits to a few quotes. In agency #3, one director made substantial deletions to potentially identifying quotes, citing safety as the reason. Another director remained open to including potentially identifying quotes, requesting minor edits to a few quotes based on harm to the agency rather than discomfort for participants. No supervisors requested edits. The quotes deleted were primarily referencing specific people within the agency that could be identifying. However the themes represented by these quotes were retained, such that the final results were not compromised by this editing process.

In agency #1, there was significant feedback to potentially identifying quotes. Three directors requested multiple edits to their quotes, reducing negative or identifying information, while two directors were mostly comfortable with their quotes and made minor edits. Similar to agency #3, the quotes deleted were primarily referencing specific people within the agency that could be identifying, while the themes were retained, so the final results were not compromised. Notably, the directors initially objected to sending supervisors their quotes or including them in

the agency report. They considered the summary of themes previously sent to supervisors as negative, and were concerned about “going backwards” with the report, noting they had made progress with supervisors during recent leadership training. The above objection was shared with my advisor and the Research Ethics Board was consulted. The REB confirmed that: the supervisors had the right to review their quotes and decide whether to include them; the directors’ permission was not required to contact the supervisors about this; and if the directors refused to include the supervisors’ quotes, the agency would withdraw from the study and the agency report would not be provided. I subsequently met with the directors of agency #1 to inform them of this decision. This was a tense meeting: the directors were concerned about supervisors’ safety given their negative comments; however, they agreed to the quotes being sent to the supervisors’ group for review. The supervisors were also sent a copy of the Informed Consent Statement, reminding them of their rights around voluntary participation. One supervisor subsequently made minor edits to a few quotes, while two supervisors indicated they were fine with the quotes. The need to sort out this challenge delayed the release of the draft report to this agency. While the integrity of the report was not compromised, this unforeseen issue strained my relationship with the directors, resulting in more formal communication.

3.3 Data Analysis

Thematic analysis and emerging key themes. All transcripts were analyzed using thematic analysis to organize the data according to emerging themes (Lapadat, 2013). A separate document was created for each group of directors and supervisors in each agency (6 in total). Following the interview guide questions (see Appendix J), separate sections were created with subheadings as codes for emerging themes (e.g. leadership conception, subheading vision). Taking one transcript at a time, the summary statements and related quotes were transferred onto

the appropriate section in the new document. This type of coding was theory-driven, as it stemmed from the research questions in the interview guide; it corresponded to the second phase of thematic analysis, by generating initial codes and collating data relevant to each code (Braun & Clarke, 2006). During this process, some information was moved around to different sections, and collective themes and key words began to emerge, as I reorganized sections based on content, and listened to what was really being said (Lapadat, 2013). As suggested by Creswell (2007) and McCracken (1988), data analysis involved immersion in the material and was an inductive process, moving from particular details to general themes, by organizing data into larger categories and looking for patterns, relationships and themes. The data from each agency was analyzed separately, and then compared across agencies to discover larger themes (Campbell, 2010). These steps corresponded to the third and fourth phase of thematic analysis by searching for and reviewing larger themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Development of key themes also occurred over a 3 month process.

The emerging key themes for each agency were condensed into one-page draft summaries and sent by email to each director and supervisor group for initial review and feedback. Asking participants to review interpretations for accuracy is part of member checking (Rubin & Babbie, 2011). It was important that these emerging themes were shared with participants to include their insights and to allow for multiple interpretations of the data, as noted by Creswell (2007). Participant feedback to these emerging themes was limited in all three agencies. In agency #2, one director responded with a minor edit and three supervisors approved the themes. Similarly, in agency #3, one director requested some edits regarding sensitive points and four supervisors approved the themes. As well, in agency #1, four directors and two supervisors requested minor edits. These edits did not impact the overall themes or findings.

Agency reports and presentation of findings. Extensive, detailed agency reports were then written for each agency over the ensuing six month period. Each report included three main sections: introduction and methodology, detailed findings, and discussion and literature review, ending with strengths and issues for consideration. The findings section integrated information from all data sources, including: themes and quotes from the interviews with directors and focus groups with supervisors, supervisors' questionnaires, observations of meetings, agency document review, and individual consultations. This integration of information was for the purpose of triangulating the data to strengthen the findings, as suggested by Yin (2009). In the discussion section, the findings were compared with existing leadership literature, noting consistencies and contradictions, which led to new insights as suggested by McCracken (1988). Each report varied between 60-90 single-spaced pages.

The agency reports were sent to the executive directors for initial review, as further member checking (Rubin & Babbie, 2011). Their responses mirrored earlier feedback. In agency #2, the executive director suggested a couple of minor edits to the report and then shared the final report with the directors and supervisors prior to the agency presentation. In agency #3, the executive director suggested multiple edits to the report, which included correction and clarification of information and rewording of a few harmful quotes. There were some points of contention (e.g. directive decision-making, lack of sharing certain information, accountability measures for supervisors), which required further discussion and editing to incorporate differing viewpoints, although this editing did not impact the overall themes in the report. This director chose not to share the final report with directors and supervisors prior to the agency presentation, preferring them to have the opportunity to hear and discuss the information during a full planning day. In agency #1, the executive director and one other director reviewed the report.

They had some questions about the anonymity of their agency and how their report would be used in the dissertation. They discussed the report with the other directors and did not feel significant editing was required. They also later shared the report with the supervisors and did not receive any specific feedback. One director indicated several pertinent themes as they planned to move forward with leadership development (see Chapter 10, Discussion, for details of their response).

As part of knowledge translation, powerpoint presentations of each report were developed for each agency and presented to the directors and supervisors at agency #2 and #3 (agency #1 did not accept my invitation to present their findings, despite multiple offers). These presentations included the four main areas, highlighted themes, integrated relevant literature, noted strengths and issues for consideration, and provided an opportunity for questions and feedback from participants. In preparing participants for these presentations, I reminded them of their primary motivation to learn more about their leadership practice and organizational culture. I also reassured them that the findings were balanced with both strengths and areas to improve. Finally, I invited them to suggest corrections if there was inaccurate information, as another opportunity for member checking (Rubin & Babbie, 2011). Participants provided varying feedback to these presentations (see Chapter 10, Discussion and Conclusions, for details of their responses).

Dissertation report. The findings from the three agency reports were integrated into this dissertation report to provide a comparative analysis across varying contexts, following a multiple case study design (Campbell 2010; Flyvbjerg, 2011; Yin, 2009). The findings were further organized and named into themes representative of the collective data, and the themes were explained by writing an introductory paragraph about each of them. Organizing the

collective themes corresponded to phase five of thematic analysis, by defining, naming, and analyzing themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The following chapters provide a comparison of the three agencies on various dimensions of organizational culture and leadership practice, noting similarities and differences. Common and contrasting themes under each main area are highlighted, using selected quotes from directors and supervisors to illustrate each theme. Using verbatim quotes to illustrate themes emerging from data analysis is one purpose researchers have endorsed in qualitative research reports (Corden & Sainsbury, 2006). Relevant information from document review, observations of leadership practice, and summaries of supervisors' questionnaires are integrated into these themes, to triangulate the data and strengthen the findings, as suggested by Yin (2009). This step represents the final phase of thematic analysis, producing the scholarly report, and it includes relating the analysis back to the research question and literature in the discussion section (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Standards and Evaluation. Standards common to qualitative research were followed to ensure methodological rigour, based on Lincoln and Guba's (1985) evaluative criteria and as suggested by Creswell (2007). These included: 'credibility,' or confidence in the findings, through field time in each agency, triangulation of methods and data sources for each agency report, and member checking with participants in each agency to verify the accuracy of findings; 'transferability' of findings to other settings through description of participant demographics and agency contexts; and 'confirmability' through an audit trail, by documenting and reporting on each stage of the research process to develop the findings and report. Some of these standards have already been mentioned and others are elaborated on below.

Triangulation of information strengthened the emerging themes. According to Greene et al. (1989), triangulation is defined as "the designed use of multiple methods, with offsetting or

counteracting biases, in investigations of the same phenomenon in order to strengthen the validity of inquiry results” (p. 256). For example, in this study directors’ self-reports of their leadership practice during individual interviews was triangulated with observations and supervisors’ reports of directors’ practice. Similarly, supervisors’ discussions during focus groups were triangulated with individual supervisors’ questionnaires. As well, directors’ and supervisors’ reports of organizational culture were triangulated with agency document review. As Greene et al. explain using two (or more) methods that reinforce the findings of each other (known as convergence) increases the validity of these findings. For example, some aspects of directors’ leadership practice converged with observations, highlighting consistencies and strengthening validity, while other aspects diverged with supervisors’ comments, raising important discrepancies. These discrepancies led to new insights, as Greene et al. confirm.

A conceptual mixed method framework for triangulation was developed by Greene et al. (1989, See Appendix S). This framework specifies recommended design characteristics for triangulation including: methods (different); phenomena under study (similar); paradigm (similar); method status (equal); implementation (independent); timing (concurrent); and study (one). The current study met most of these triangulation criteria: the methods used were different to reduce bias (interviews, observations, focus groups, questionnaires, document review); the phenomena under study was similar, namely leadership and organizational culture; the paradigm was similar, namely the interpretive paradigm; the method status was equally important for the primary methods (interviews, observations and focus groups) and less consequential for the supplementary methods (questionnaires and document review); the implementation was both independent (for document review and questionnaires completed apart from other methods) and interactive (for interviews, observations and focus groups completed concurrently); the timing

was both sequential (initial document review and questionnaires) and concurrent (interviews, observations and focus groups); and there was one study completed.

The information from these multiple methods served to inform one another and the overall study, both during data collection and data analysis (see Appendix S). This process was important to discover areas where the data converged and strengthened themes, and where the data diverged and raised discrepancies (Greene et al., 1989). For example, during data collection, initial document review provided important information regarding the agency context, structure and culture, which could then be used to help tailor probes with participants during interviews and focus groups. Information collected through concurrent observations both converged and diverged with information collected in interviews and focus groups, providing opportunities to probe disparities further. During data analysis, initial themes were generated from the data arising in the interviews, observations and focus groups for each agency. These themes were then supplemented with data from the supervisors' questionnaires and document review. This combined information converged in some areas, strengthening the interpretation and validity of findings and diverged in other areas, raising key considerations and insights for further discussion. For example, across the three agencies, directors' and supervisors' ideal leadership practices converged strengthening this finding, while their actual leadership practices diverged, raising important questions about the influence of their organizational cultures. Integration of data from multiple methods during both analysis and interpretation, as in this study, is the preferred albeit rare choice (Greene et al., 1989).

An audit trail was formed by documenting and reporting on each stage of the research process to develop findings and the final report (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Rubin & Babbie, 2011). This included: written records of ongoing communication and consultation (via email, phone and

meetings) with participants and my research advisor, as well as my reflections; written records of agency invitations, screening and data collection schedules; developing written guides for all methods used; audiotaping and transcribing interviews and focus groups; taking detailed field notes of observations and documents reviewed; accurate coding through constant comparison of themes with guides for each method, as noted by Creswell (2007); using quotes to provide evidence of my data analysis and interpretations and demonstrate how my findings emerged from the data, which provides an audit trail to increase credibility (Corden & Sainsbury, 2006); and ongoing member checking with participants of quotes, draft themes and reports, including their feedback into agency reports. All of these documents were used to inform the research process and ensure auditability and reliability of the dissertation report.

I also strove to meet several evaluation criteria, as noted below (Howe & Eisenhardt, 1990, in Creswell, 2007). First, I strove for consistency between the research questions, methods of data collection and analysis, and competency in their use. My experience in these settings, development of rapport with participants, and adherence to research methods all facilitated this. Second, I was aware of and acknowledged my own subjectivity and experiences that may have influenced the data collection, analysis and interpretation. Third, I referred to the leadership literature in human services and strove to make a substantive contribution towards this. Lastly, I ensured and protected the privacy and confidentiality of participants' voices.

Limitations. There were some limitations to this study that need to be acknowledged. First and perhaps most importantly, most of the findings are based on self-report of participants' behaviour rather than direct observations. It is probable that there was some discrepancy between reported and actual leadership practices as a result. Second, these findings were gathered at one moment in time, and represent a snapshot, as one year has elapsed between data collection and

the reporting of findings. The leadership practices and organizational culture in these agencies are dynamic processes and will continue to evolve; hence these findings cannot reflect their continual progress and current state. Third, this study was limited to the senior levels of directors and supervisors. While it would have been informative to gather feedback on their leadership practice from staff, this was not practically feasible within the parameters of this research project. Fourth, while most directors and supervisors participated in this study, feedback from one agency was limited, and this may have affected the conclusions drawn. As well, although every attempt was made to inform the participants of the nature of the research study and findings, there were some who reacted defensively to the information presented, which may have limited their response. Finally, the multiple case study design provided in-depth examination of these issues to further understanding; however, it was not meant to generalize to other settings.

3.4 Summary

The detailed review of methodology, including the research design, data collection and data analysis, sets the stage to present the major findings of this research study. As outlined in the introduction, the ensuing six chapters (4-9) will focus on the agency case studies, leadership conceptualization and practice, the impact of the external environment, and the interaction between leadership practice and organizational culture in each agency. One explanatory note about the findings section: the term ‘director’ is used generically to include executive, service and administrative directors and the term ‘supervisor’ is used generically to include all supervisors and team leaders. Words in capitals reflect spoken emphasis by the participant. To begin, the following chapter provides an overview of each agency case study to lay the foundation of their unique context.

Chapter 4: Participating Agencies

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of each agency as a separate case study to lay the foundation of their unique context. Each case study includes a detailed case description of the agency and their interest in participating in the study. The rationale for the order in which the agencies are presented in the dissertation is also worthy of comment. In this chapter and ensuing chapters (7-9), the order in which the agencies are presented is based on their relative strengths in leadership practice and organizational culture. As a result, Agency #2 is presented first as they exhibited strengths in several areas, followed by Agency #3 and then Agency #1, who both had more issues with their leadership practice and organizational culture. A summary of each agency's strengths and challenges, and a comparative analysis of similarities and differences between the three agencies, is presented in the final Discussion chapter (10).

4.1 Agency #2 - Children's Mental Health, 0-14 years

Case description. This agency has a long history, having begun almost 50 years ago as a residential treatment center for children. Currently, this agency is a medium size, unionized and accredited children's mental health outpatient and residential treatment center in an Ontario city, with outreach to the county. It is funded by the Ministry of Child and Youth Services (MCYS), through grants as well as OPR (Outside Paid Residential fee for service), with a combined budget of nine million dollars (informal consult, March 19, 2014). It serves 1200 children per year, ages 0-14 with mental health and behavioural challenges and their families (Accreditation Report, 2011). Services are extensive and include: OPR fee for service, day and residential treatment, respite, crisis intake, SCIP (school based) early years 0-6 services, early years consultation, focused family therapy, intensive family in home services, child and family therapy, parent child groups and psychological consultation (Accreditation Report, 2011; Admin

P&P 1-30B, 1-31, Clinical Org. Chart).

This agency is governed by a community board of directors. There is a senior leadership team with four directors, including an Executive Director, Assistant Director/Director of Intensive Services, Director of Clinical Services, Director of Finance/Admin, and an Executive Assistant. There are fifteen supervisors/team leaders (Org. chart; Admin P&P 1-30), and approximately 130 staff, mostly child and youth workers, child and family therapists, psychologists and psychiatrists (informal consult, March 19, 2014).

A number of risk factors were identified in the community served by the agency, including a lack of family physicians, higher poverty rates, single parents, juvenile crime and increasing mental health issues (Accreditation Report, 2011). There was also increasing cultural and ethnic diversity, with more immigrants, refugees, Spanish, Arabic, French, Aboriginal and LGBTQ clients; the agency implemented diversity training and a diversity community of practice as a result.

Interest in participation. The directors were interested in participating in this study, as they felt it aligned with their flatter agency structure, participatory culture, emphasis on learning and communities of practice, focus on staff wellness, and commitment to leadership development (see Chapter 7). They were concerned about the impact of upcoming ministry changes on the agency, including lead agency and system transformation and they were preparing for succession planning (see Chapter 6). They were also interested in learning more about leadership practice and change management frameworks. The agency had been challenged by multiple director changes and a recent failed amalgamation attempt with other agencies (see Chapter 7).

4.2 Agency #3 – Children’s Mental Health, 12-18 years

Case description. This agency is a small, unionized and accredited non-profit children’s mental health centre in Ontario, with both rural and urban site locations. It has a long history of providing day treatment and residential services to complex, hard to serve youth ages 12-18 (up to age 22 with MCYS agreement/CAS funding) and their families. It is funded by the Ministry of Child and Youth Services (MCYS) with a budget of 7.3 million dollars (budget report, 2013-2014). It typically serves 700-800 youth per year (up to 1000 recently), with severe emotional, behavioural and psychological difficulties (Accreditation Report, 2009). Rural services include: day treatment, intensive residential programs, secure custody/detention, and aftercare individual and family counselling. Urban services include: crisis intake team, after-hours crisis support, day and group treatment, family support, mental health counselling and single-session walk-in services. Youth can be referred for services by themselves, other agencies or court-ordered.

This agency is governed by a community board of directors. There is a senior leadership team with five directors and managers, including an Executive Director, an urban Program Director, a rural Program Director, a Manager of Human Resources, and a Manager of Finance and Administration. There is also a supervisor team with six supervisors. There is approximately 120 staff, mostly child and youth (CYW) workers, along with six social workers (these positions were reduced due to funding cuts 12-15 years ago). The agency also supports student placements, mostly CYW, as well as nursing, and BSW/MSW, and volunteers (organizational chart, 2014; informal consult, April 1, 2014; human resources annual report 2012-2013). More broadly, the local community was facing rising unemployment due to loss of industries, and clients were presenting with very complex needs (informal consult, April 1, 2014).

Interest in participation. The directors were interested in participating in this study, as they felt it fit with their longstanding agency practice of participatory and situational leadership, although they noted a recent shift to a more directive approach in response to increasing government demands (see Chapter 5). The directors expressed an interest in having a focused time to invest in their leadership development, as this had ‘fallen off the table’ due to competing priorities, including a recent failed amalgamation attempt with other agencies. The directors were also interested in learning more about the type of leadership required to function in the current government context with increased demands for outcome measurement and transparency. The directors were facing a time of uncertainty and were concerned about the upcoming lead agency transformation process and impact on organizational viability (see Chapter 6). They noted the challenge as leaders of motivating staff in this context.

4.3 Agency #1 – Child Welfare, 0-16 years

Case description. This agency is a mid-size, unionized, charitable non-profit child welfare agency in an Ontario city, with outreach to the county (website). It began in 1897, and since 1984 has operated under the Child and Family Services Act (website/history document). It is legally mandated by the Ministry of Child and Youth Services (MCYS) to protect children and youth from the risk of physical, sexual and emotional abuse and neglect, and to provide service for children in care and adoption (website; 2013 general agency brochure). Funding is provided by MCYS with an annual budget of 19.1 million dollars (informal consult, March 21, 2014). It serves approximately 700 families per year, 200 children in care, 90 foster parents and 120-150 active volunteers (informal consult, March 21, 2014; Annual Report 2012-2013). Services include: family and community services (intake, family services, family conferencing, after hours services), children’s services (families to permanence i.e. foster care and adoption, and

family support), early intervention and collaboration with community agencies, and community development support in local neighbourhoods (website; agency brochures; organizational chart, 2014).

The agency is governed by a community board of directors (website). There is a senior leadership team with five directors and one manager, including an Executive Director, two Directors of Service, a Director of Human Resources and Property, a Director of Finance and Administration, and a Manager of Information, Quality and Technology (organizational chart, 2014). There is also a supervision team with 13 service supervisors, each supervising an average team of 6 staff. There are approximately 125 staff, mostly white, female social workers with BSW/MSW qualifications. There are a few staff from racial and gender minority groups, and the agency is committed to diversity in staff and service (informal consult, March 21, 2014; general agency brochure, 2013).

Interest in participation. The directors were initially interested in participating in this study, as they wanted to focus on leadership development, succession planning and learning culture. Leadership approaches and parallels between the study and agency initiatives and strategic directions were discussed during initial meetings. Developing a shared understanding of organizational excellence and promoting this in the organization was deemed a priority, and the senior management team endorsed moving ahead with the research project. However, the agency had been negatively impacted by ministry funding cutbacks and staff layoffs and the timeline for the research project was delayed; during this time the agency's participation in the study was uncertain (see Chapter 5).

Chapter 5: Leadership Conceptualization and Practice

Having reviewed the agency case studies to provide context, the purpose of this chapter is to present the findings from the first research question, namely how do the directors and supervisors in the three agencies conceptualize and practice leadership? This was an area of strength for these agencies and brought good news: directors and supervisors appeared knowledgeable about what the literature considers ideal leadership practices. They ascribed to various leadership approaches from the literature such as servant leadership, situational leadership and participatory leadership to some degree. They also endorsed several core leadership practices to varying degrees, such as: shared visioning, role modelling and living values, positively influencing, motivating, coaching and mentoring others, building trusting relationships, strength-based teamwork, and managing authority and conflict (Hardina et al., 2007; Holosko, 2009; Kouzes & Posner, 2007).

The findings in this chapter will be presented in an integrated way, highlighting the common and contrasting themes that arose in all three agencies. As noted earlier, most of the reported findings are based on participants' accounts rather than observations of their behaviour. Still, the triangulation of data collection methods and sources facilitated the identification of some discrepancies between their ideal leadership practices described here and their actual leadership practices, discussed further in relation to organizational culture (see Chapters 7-9).

5.1 Leadership Conceptualization

Several directors across the three agencies conceptualized leadership as influencing and motivating others "leadership means initiating and motivating others to move along a path" (A2D4), towards common goals, "bring people to a sense of common understanding, common goals" (A2D2); this is endorsed as a common definition of leadership (Northouse, 2013). This

included improving and supporting others, “making things better, both in achieving a goal as well as for those that are on the journey with the leader” (A3D2), while accomplishing tasks “getting the job done, keeping people motivated to do the job and enjoying their work” (A3D5) and managing change “effective leadership means effective change management” (A2D4). Supervisors expanded on this theme, describing leadership as balancing “direction and support, while...allowing for sufficient process for everyone to feel included in the final decision” (A2FG1), and providing the resources to support staff work “making sure things are available...create an environment to allow the staff to do the best work they can” (A2FG2).

5.2 Leadership Approaches

Directors and supervisors ascribed to various leadership approaches, such as servant leadership (Anand et al., 2011), situational leadership (Hersey et al., 2007), and participatory leadership (Hardina et al., 2007) to some degree, and these leadership approaches varied among the three agencies. They also varied in their perspectives of participatory leadership; some endorsed this approach, while others viewed it as limited.

Leadership approaches. In agency #2, directors and supervisors practiced servant, strength-based and inclusive leadership approaches. One director labelled their approach as ‘servant leadership’ by supporting others, “in most of my meetings with people, I try to remember to say, ‘how can I help you do what you need to do?’” (A2D1); another director focused on understanding others “I want to understand what they (staff) value, because if I don't understand that...then I'm not going to be as effective” (A2D3). This approach was observed during leadership and supervisory team meetings, as directors respectfully listened to each other and supervisors, asked questions to clarify understanding, and agreed to follow up on issues affecting staff.

Consistent with a participatory leadership approach (Hardina et al., 2007), several directors in agency #2 viewed leadership as strength-based:

Leadership to me really begins with...eliciting strengths and skills within others, plus sharing strengths, knowledge and skills that I have...it's trying to level the playing field with people, so that you're not doing power over. (A2D1)

This included empowering others to develop their leadership abilities, "a good leader creates strengths in all of the people they lead...it doesn't matter if you're a front-line staff...if you've got some leadership abilities or strengths then we want you to be a leader" (A2D2). Aligning with emerging models of leadership (Lawler, 2007), directors recognized that leadership is shared and can be learned:

Leadership is and should be shared...in (our teams) there isn't a leader and we really try to promote that throughout all of the teams ...It's not about the title, it's not about my position, it's not about authority...these are things that people can learn. (A2D3)

Directors demonstrated this participatory approach during the observed all staff meeting. For example, directors encouraged staff as 'champions' to coordinate events around an upcoming celebration and another team of staff was recognized as the 'champions' of agency accreditation. This team was described as an opportunity to foster staff engagement and demonstrate effective agency work (informal consultation, April 10, 2014). Similarly, some supervisors upheld a strength-based and inclusive leadership approach:

I believe in a consensus kind of model and inclusive...that's not only what I do but what the agency has done and what the agency supports. (A2FG2)

This approach was also upheld in supervisors' comments on questionnaires and observed in one supervisor team meeting, when the director asked supervisors for examples of success and

strategies to deal with staff issues. This approach corresponds to an empowering organization, where there is a true sharing of the leadership role and both workers and clients can contribute to meaningful organizational change (Shera & Page, 1995).

In agency #1 directors and supervisors varied their leadership practices between being consultative and directive. Some directors described themselves as “a reluctant leader...many of the great ideas that come out of this place have nothing to do with me, my role is to champion them” (A1D1), leading and supporting others from behind, which supports servant leadership:

I really recognize that my contributions to this organization and my leadership is to support the other people that are in front...my role is to make sure that we're healthy as an organization and to provide leadership from the back of the bus. (A1D4)

Others shifted to leading out front when needed, “I need to go back into a real leadership role for a period of time...I'm trying to lead from behind with them and it's not working.” (A1D2).

In agency #3, both directors and supervisors upheld their primary leadership approach as ‘situational leadership,’ “I use a blend of situational leadership approaches, I try to look at the context, I look at the people, I look at the timeframes” (A3D2). This approach was explained as best suited to the context and staff, “there's situational leadership, some (staff) just require a bit more direction ...other staff get quite offended by that...so there's a time and place for different kinds of leadership” (A3FG1). This mirrors the definition in the literature: situational leadership varies depending on the workers' level of experience and ability and the circumstances of the task (Hersey et al., 2007). This view aligned with the initial meeting (Nov. 27, 2014), where directors described their dominant leadership practice as ‘situational leadership,’ which varied depending on the context, staffing group and circumstances. Supervisors also mentioned needing different types of leadership depending on the situation (A3SQ).

Similar to above, in agency #1 some directors viewed leadership as varied:

Leadership I think is a really individual thing...you need different kinds of leaders, based on where your organization is at...You can't have everybody lead the same way, because then you don't get anywhere. (A1D4)

Supervisors varied their approach, depending on staff needs, consistent with a situational leadership approach (Hersey et al., 2007):

You have to vary your leadership style or your supervisory style to the need of the person who is the supervisee. Some people may need more direct intervention than someone who has autonomy...if you have a highly functioning team, you don't necessarily have to micromanage. (A1FG1)

Supervisors discussed being more consultative with experienced staff and being more directive with complex situations, "My current team is fairly experienced, so it's consultation that I feel I'm doing, when needed I move into being directive" (A1FG2). This theme was also noted on their questionnaires (A1SQ).

Participatory leadership. Participatory leadership was endorsed to varying degrees in the three agencies. In agency #2, directors and supervisors displayed an excellent understanding of participatory leadership:

Participatory management is that there is no hierarchy, that it's as flat as possible, that you push down decision-making to the people who are most close to what the decisions being made about, and you support and empower them to be able to do that. (A2D2)

Directors endorsed it as an ideal approach that they strove to practice:

I don't think there's any other way to be, it's how I HOPE to practice...I would say that it is VERY shared here...I speak in terms of ideals, but you try to live your ideals every day, it doesn't mean we're successful at them. We can only do our best. (A2D2)

It is the way to go...in any environment I've worked in, collaborative, participatory, coaching, team, those types of things is what works. I just can't see a more authoritative (approach) being appropriate for here. (A2D4)

Supervisors also endorsed this approach and noted it was embedded into the agency:

It's probably consistent with the consensus mode, and that's something we as an agency believe in...That's how I would describe the culture here. I think it's the ideal. (A2FG2)

It's crucial, a lot of us know to include our staff whenever we can or let them know when it's a consult decision...there is a higher expectation, staff here see themselves as having some say in things and being heard. (A2FG1)

This participatory approach extended to involving parents and youth in all levels of the agency. For example, the agency supported a parent mentor advocacy group, parent community of practice, youth mentoring program, consumer board representation, and client feedback measures (informal consult, March 19, 2014).

Directors also showed openness to learning more about this approach, while recognizing there might be limitations:

We need to look at what is research saying about leadership and management and apply it, because the purse is not going to get any bigger, the client demand will, how do we deliver that service is important. (A2D3).

There's a lot about the language of participatory management or leadership that appeals to me...and I would also like to know what some of the downsides are...there's times when you want to involve the voices of everybody, there are times when you can't, and so does that mean you're not being participatory? (A2D1)

Similarly, in agency #3, several directors confirmed they valued a participatory leadership approach where possible, citing benefits of staff engagement and involvement:

I like a collaborative or participatory leadership approach...It's challenging at times...I want to have input and influence where it's going to make a difference...So where there's opportunities for participative...it's the best way, because it's drawing in everyone's expertise, knowledge, more collaborative, people are getting on board. (A3D2)

They noted challenges in practice around decision-making, "as long as we're clear where that (engagement) ends and where decision-making starts, if they can't go hand-in-hand" (A3D4):

People want to have a part in decision making, as long as it isn't a tough decision that somehow comes back on them. That's an essential aspect of management and leadership!...So the participatory leadership approach...there are times when that's absolutely the best thing to do, and there are other times when it isn't good. (A3D1)

Several directors in agency #1 also believed in participatory leadership, noting similar benefits around involvement "I really like the concept and I like asking for input, that's really trying to promote shared ownership of the work" (A1D2) and engagement:

People actually get to feel like they're making a huge difference because they can point to different things and say I made that decision or it was because of me that we went in that direction. To me those values outweigh any of the costs, they really do. (A1D1)

Directors varied their approach, “I’m participatory to a point, and then when we’re not getting anywhere, I’ll move into non-participatory, I’ll take the lead and become directive” (A1D2).

They noted similar limitations around decision-making and input:

It's very important for people to understand and have clarity around what their contributions are, and if they're being asked to provide input, or feedback, or if they're being asked to participate in a decision. (A1D4)

The danger is making people feel empowered but not letting them think they run the show...you’re asked for your input, and then you feel like none of your input was integrated, and it’s almost worse than not asking your opinion in the first place. (A1D5)

However, while participatory leadership was valued in these latter two agencies, it was not being practiced to the same extent. In agency #3, there had been a longstanding practice of participatory leadership, which had recently shifted to a more directive approach in response to new managerialism (initial meeting, Nov. 27, 2014). Directors felt a participatory approach was not efficient or effective with the government requirements for outcomes and that human services were now requiring a business management approach (initial meeting, Nov. 27, 2014):

Given both the internal factors and external factors, there’s been more structure given...with changes in the supervisory level, more direction from (other director) and I than in the past, some of that is situational, current context (A3D2).

There was a time when we tried really hard to be more engaging and involving in key decisions. The lessons learned that we were not moving at NEAR the pace that we needed to and were going sideways in some cases. (A3D3)

Directors and supervisors also viewed this approach as limited because it required significant

time, commitment and everyone being on board (initial meeting, Nov. 27, 2014).

Similarly, in agency #1, one director cautioned that participatory approaches have limited value in their current context, given clear government accountability and standards:

In an organization like ours where there is clear accountability and standards that have to be enforced and decisions that have to be made...it would be really hard for us to implement like a full-scale version of that...it could work around decision-making, around program design...where it can't work is around the non-negotiables. (A1D3)

Supervisors also acknowledged challenges with this approach, in terms of inconsistency between directors' espoused and actual leadership practices:

It's good, but it doesn't necessarily happen...we try participatory management here...but what we did was flatten the hierarchy. So there are fewer people making the decisions now, rather than more...it doesn't feel participatory to me. (A1FG2)

This issue is supported in the literature: leaders may ascribe to a participatory approach in theory while operating from a hierarchy structure and retaining control over decision-making, causing confusion and frustration for staff (O'Connor & Netting, 2009). Supervisors requested more clarity and transparency regarding input to decision-making, and suggested ways to do this:

More transparency about exactly what was talked about, those decisions that you will have no input into. That's fine, just tell me what those are...Rather than the illusion of ...'we care about what you think when really we don't.' (A1FG2)

I don't think an organization like this can be completely participatory...but it's nice to know when we have input and when we don't...So perhaps more exploration of what it truly means to be a participatory leadership style, how that could be integrated into what we have...so that's it's not just in language but in practice. (A1FG2)

5.3 Shared Visioning

There were some common themes arising in this leadership characteristic in all three agencies. Some directors stressed the critical importance of visioning and strategic thinking to senior leadership positions (Northouse, 2013). Several directors and supervisors emphasized creating a shared vision with others (Holosko, 2009; Kouzes & Posner, 2007). Achieving vision in practice, balancing visioning and implementation were also discussed.

Importance of vision, strategic thinking. One director viewed visioning and strategic thinking as critical to leadership in senior management positions:

Vision is terribly important in this position...If you don't have a sense as a leader of where you'd like that organization to go over the next few years, you simply shouldn't be in the position...the ability to think strategically...to position the organization in the broader world is a critical part of leadership. (A3D1)

This strategic thinking included recognizing the relevancy and time bounded nature of vision:

It's incumbent on a leader to try to recognize what the current vision is and to assess its relevancy...sometimes a vision is time limited, and I think we're on the cusp of that now...what you do related to the bigger picture, it's not just about (agency) anymore...I do think it changes, it doesn't stay the same...it can be influenced by funders. (A2D2)

Other directors stressed clarity of vision, "setting the tone for an agency, having a real clear and focused vision, and being able to communicate that...like I know what a good leader stands for" (A1D5), being purposeful and communicating that to others:

Leadership (is) people who are purposeful and follow a vision, have strong commitment to relationships, outcomes and purpose...people have to buy into your vision...if you really want to lead people, you need to know where you're heading. (A1D1)

Shared vision. Several directors recognized the importance of creating a shared vision that everyone contributes to and is committed to:

I think there needs to be a common vision in an organization and I think that needs to be owned by everybody in the organization. I don't think that can be top-down, although I do think the Board and the senior team, we can define the parameters. (A2D2)

It's not a one person show, but it's drawing in the best for all concerned...trying to come together...to meet that vision...Engaging people's skills...also engaging people's heart that they feel like this is a worthy thing to be doing. (A3D2)

While not as pronounced, supervisors also agreed that a shared vision was necessary, "leaders have a vision but they have room for other people's visions as well" (A2FG1), towards a common purpose "working towards a common vision for the organization or whatever it is you're leading" (A1FG2). Encouraging a shared vision (A3SQ) of best practice, with goal setting, project planning and an outcome focus (A2SQ), was also mentioned by supervisors.

Achievable in practice. Some directors also highlighted that vision needs to be achievable in practice and demonstrated through action:

Vision is important...but you've got to be able to orchestrate that into achievable steps.

There are people that have great vision, but don't achieve much...So the goal has to be clear, achievable, and at times short-term, vision can be very long-term. (A2D3)

Leadership to me is when somebody can articulate a vision and carry out that vision with others through demonstrated action...there are things you can hear, feel, smell, touch that exist as a result of that vision coming to life. (A1D2)

This included operationalizing the vision, "so then I take that organizational vision and I

translate it into what's my role, how can I make that happen" (A2D4), striking a balance between visioning and implementation, "it's important to have a BALANCE...if there is an agreed-upon common vision then I'm the person that can make it happen" (A2D2), and organizational readiness "what do we need in order to ensure that we're steady enough as an organization to be able to do that forward thinking, visionary kind of work?" (A1D4).

Supervisors also emphasized operationalizing the vision for staff, "it's our job...to help the staff operationalize what it (vision) means, help them to put into practice those things that are going to help us fulfill the vision" (A1FG1), and the challenges in practice, "it's (vision) hard in our role sometimes because we're dealing with the fires...it's more complex sometimes than we realize" (A1FG1).

5.4 Role Modelling and Living Values

Modeling by example and influencing others emerged as a common theme in all three agencies, and these are considered central leadership characteristics (Holosko, 2009; Kouzes & Posner, 2007). Directors and supervisors spoke of the importance of role modelling and influencing others through their attitudes, behaviours and language, and acknowledging their limitations. Some also emphasized living individual, agency, and broader social work values.

Role modelling through behaviour, language. Several directors emphasized the importance of leaders' role modelling, "there's a big piece around mentorship, and being a good role model...I think it's their persona that they just bring to the table" (A1D5). This included influencing others through their presence:

I really do try to BE what I think a good leader should be, like I actually try to DO it, 'cause I think modeling is important. So it's your behavior, it's how you hold yourself...I don't go down a hall ever and not speak to people, ever, ever. (A2D2)

In agency #2, this role modelling was demonstrated during informal observations of two directors greeting staff in the hallways on separate occasions, as well as during the all staff meeting, where directors used ‘we’ language in conversation with staff. Several directors also described role modelling through their attitudes, language and behaviour:

The other way I try to influence people is by modeling how to do the work. I bring a positive attitude every day to work...I try to be engaging with everybody I work with ...model a good work ethic...model boundaries around work. (A3D3)

I try to model, I try to demonstrate humility, I try to be a good listener, I’ve really worked on talking less and listening more...really working on my voice isn’t the most important one in the room. (A1D3)

I also try and model interactions with our clients and what I would like to see. So simple courteous, positive interactions, interest in the other person, both hearing what's going on with them, as well as a project that they might be working on. (A3D2)

Some supervisors also highlighted the importance of role modelling and leading by example through their behaviour, support, and respectful language; this role modelling was also mentioned on their questionnaires:

Certainly modeling...Walking the walk, so somebody who has great integrity and they do what they say they’re going to do, and the follow up is always there. (A2FG1)

I very much try to let my staff know that I’m there to help...when it’s a “all hands on deck” so I really try and model that I am available and I’m there to help. (A2FG2)

A good leader also has to be really respectful, both to their colleagues and the clients they are working with, it’s not a great example if you’re saying disrespectful things. (A1FG2)

Some directors in agency #1 also highlighted role modelling being visible, responsive, consistent and balanced with staff:

Visibility in a leader is CRITICAL...being available for people, responding to phone messages quickly, responding to emails...as a leader you know what's happening within the organization, you care about it, you're committed. (A1D4)

Consistency is another element of my leadership that I've worked really hard to develop. You can be flexible...open to new ideas but you have to be really consistent and I think the values that we set as an organization help you to maintain that consistency. (A1D4)

I try to present a balanced workday, not that I'm overworked or stressed...I don't want them to unnecessarily be burdened with that. (A1D5)

Others mentioned role modelling being vulnerable and acknowledging their limitations:

Not just role modeling from a position of strength all the time...how do you strengthen the walls...so that people know that this is a caring, safe place. (A2D1)

Being a role model...demonstrating that it's okay to take risks, you have to be a good listener, it's okay to admit you were wrong or you don't know something. (A1D3)

I always try to think at the end of the day...what would I do differently, did I miss an opportunity, if I'd been paying attention would I have handled that differently? (A3D4)

Role modelling values, beliefs. Several directors reflected on being clear about their own values, “I need to know what my values are...WHY those are important, how they will affect my work and others’ work” (A2D3); as a way of influencing others, “I do have a bit of a strong personality...so people know what my values are and I think that influences” (A1D2); and encouraging those values in others, “the way that I view leadership, it is really based on building

a community of people who want to value the same kinds of things, and also challenging values when they don't fit or behaviors” (A2D1). Some directors also role modelled values of honesty and transparency:

I always try and lead in a way that I'm proud of...something I can stand behind that it's ethical and honest...It's who I AM, I demonstrate my leadership through my values...I just try and walk the talk...how you conduct yourself in every interaction. (A3D4)

What I've tried to strengthen in terms of my own values about myself is transparency, honesty, telling people when I don't know things, demonstrating commitment and consistency...when people feel that they're safe at their workplace, it's because you've demonstrated that over time, you're consistent. (A2D1)

In agency #2, the directors were observed to role model these values during the all staff meeting, when they openly discussed the lead agency application process and details with staff. Directors supported the agency's value that “honesty and integrity...doing the right thing, being transparent...the best policy!” This focus on core values was further reinforced by an agency code of conduct, which set an expectation for staff to act with honesty and integrity, uphold the agency reputation, trust, professional ethics and boundaries (Admin P&P, 3-10, 3-12). Similarly, some supervisors highlighted integrity and upholding their beliefs, “I try to stay true to what I believe in, I try to be transparent” (A2FG1), explaining this:

Having integrity is important to stay true to what you believe, if there might be a temptation to go in a different direction, take an easy way out, have some integrity, report what you need to report, keep quiet what you need to keep quiet. (A1FG2)

Some directors also stressed the importance of role modelling agency values and leading by example; promoting organizational values is a core aspect of leadership (Lewis et al., 2012):

I feel that SO strongly that our organizational values, there's a need to model that. Our first value being responsivity...in believing strongly in the value and actually walking the talk, I model it for others, so people can count on me in responding. (A3D1)

Leading by example...if you've got a director who's really got his heart and soul into the organization and the vision...spending our resources the most effective way, accounting for spending public money, towards our goals or mission, stewardship. (A3D5)

One is to be very aware of minorities...around client diversity and accessibility, around culture, and what's on our walls...I'm influencing that because I'm talking about it, to make it more visible, because that's very much part of our values. (A2D3)

Some directors tried to influence others through broader social justice values; they expressed frustration when others did not share this view:

Without a broader understanding of the world we live in...and the policy direction from the government...I want to influence people to CARE...understand the context poverty, racism, things that are putting people in positions that we're now having to respond to....that's really important when you're in a leadership position...my frustration gets in the way of genuinely engaging with people. (A1D2)

We had a conversation about what that (feminist perspective) really means...living out your values, it's about eliciting the best out of others, not being silent when there's an injustice...and this organization puts a lot of value on that. (A2D1)

5.5 Positively Influencing, Motivating, Coaching and Mentoring

There were common and contrasting themes in this area. Directors recognized their leadership influence on organizational culture and others as central and this is supported in the

literature (Schein, 2010; Lewis et al., 2012). Some directors emphasized their positional influence, others their personal influence and mentoring role. Some used their influence to build staff capacity and achieve work, and a few noted limited influence due to their middle management position. Directors and supervisors in all three agencies also strove to motivate staff, although there were differences in how this was achieved, and a few mentioned informally mentoring staff to leadership positions. Motivating and supporting others by being strength-based and encouraging is consistent with participatory leadership models (Hardina et al., 2007).

Leadership influence. Directors in all three agencies recognized that they influenced organizational culture through their language, behaviour and positional power:

The way that we conduct ourselves as leaders sets the tone and were constantly visible, everything you do is watched and monitored and noticed...you have to be aware all the time of your behavior and your words and the things that you say. (A1D3)

When you're in a leadership role, people are watching you and how you manage things and how you don't manage things, and you do have to pay attention...as leaders, this is what is required of us, taking the high road even when it doesn't feel fair. (A2D1)

I can have an enormous impact on culture. I can either build it up or destroy it. There is that power in this position and influence that you can easily do that...There's this interactional dance that goes on, culture is the same way it's a relationship dance. (A3D1)

Directors discussed varying ways to influence organizational culture, through their approach, "my leadership style, because it has sort of that informal relationship-based element of it, promotes (the culture) because we are an informal agency and we are smaller" (A1D4), and positive interactions, "every interaction that I have with a person is an opportunity to influence

culture in a positive way...making sure there are good relationships at all levels” (A3D2). In agency #3, this included interacting with others, “I try and have an open door policy, try and get out and about, chat with people in their context” (A3D2); being responsive, “when I get either emails or calls, I try to deal with them immediately” (A3D5); and being predictable, “consistent, reliable, so people know what they’re getting” (A3D4). Directors’ positive influence was recognized formally for their “passionate commitment” (Accreditation Report, 2009, p. 6).

In agency #2, directors also recognized their central leadership influence on others, “influencing and persuading is your best friend if it's done for good and not for evil” (A2D1), and they emphasized positive influence for change:

It’s key HOW you influence others, in a positive way. A leader needs to be positive and have strength and dedication and endurance and all those qualities to make change accepted and a positive thing in an organization. (A2D4)

This included community influence, “if you have the opportunity to change the way things are to make it better for kids in a broader sense, then you should use your influence to do that” (A2D2).

They also stressed being aware of their positional power and striving to limit their influence:

It’s (influence) very powerful, and you have to be WELL aware of it...I try NOT to influence...I know that often I can say something, then I do influence people...you’ve always got to be aware of how you influence others and the situation. (A2D2)

You’ve got to be very aware of the issue of power and authority...I don’t think a leader is meant to do that (be authoritarian). I know in my practice very much I want to listen in a new way. (A2D3)

In agency #1 and #3, some directors distinguished between their positional influence and personal influence, emphasizing the latter:

Some influence is given because your position...people remind me of that all the time...But I also think there's personal influence...it's more real to me...you influence people through your personality, through your ideas, through relationships. (A1D1)

I have leadership because I'm a director...I also have personal leadership...the ability to influence comes over time, when you build up the visibility, the consistency, the clarity, people know what you stand for and then you become ABLE to influence. (A1D4)

This included a mentoring and teaching role, “trying to move things in certain directions ... through dialogue, a mentoring process and a challenging process...I ask a lot of questions to stimulate discussion...in terms of direction-giving, I do that very little” (A3D1). Other directors focused on supporting staff strengths and building staff capacity:

Good leaders really try and know the people that they're with...and how they may best contribute...then aligning each member of the group, to achieve the desired tasks or get where you need to go on the journey. (A3D2)

I'm helping develop people and I add value to both their experience and the organization as a whole...I always try and think about what I'm offering to people in terms of how I lead, does this build capacity for them? (A3D4)

Supervisors influenced others to achieve shared goals, “you can get work done differently and easier sometimes, instead of a big fight...it depends on how you influence them...it can be a bad influence or a good influence” (A1FG1). Setting and managing expectations, giving workers freedom to work within deadlines, and providing resources and support were other strategies supervisors mentioned to accomplish work with staff (A1SQ).

In agency #1 and #3, some directors and supervisors noted limited influence:

Sometimes I feel I have a fair bit of influence and other times I feel like people are just going to do what they want and they're not listening...Some of it is about picking your battles, is it mission-critical for me and the organization to move this forward? (A1D4)

Supervisors also reported having less influence on organizational culture. There were varying reasons for this: daily pressures, "we're so consumed with our day to day stuff that we don't have that opportunity to influence" (A3FG1); team position, "I feel I'm influencing my team... I don't know if I'm influencing the greater agency" (A3FG1); and timing, "I don't feel at this point that I have much impact...at other points we could take some initiative, run with things" (A1FG2).

This lack of influence, or limited influence at the staff and team levels, was also noted in supervisors' questionnaires (A1SQ; A3SQ).

Motivating through coaching, mentoring. In agency #2, there was a strong theme from directors of motivating staff through coaching, mentoring and being strength-based:

Coaching, mentoring, trying not to move to solutions or criticisms quickly, demonstrating a genuine interest and care for each person...It's about pulling out strengths in others and coaching the best from people...Really looking at each meeting that I have with those people as an opportunity to create something together. A2D1

This included being "collaborative, consultative, supportive and directive depending on the content...I like to think of myself as a resource for them" (A2D4), trusting and empowering staff and acting as a resource:

I tell them right up front that I trust them to do the job...I'll be the resource to them, but I'm going to trust them to do whatever it takes until they show me that I can't trust them...Very flexible, it's about giving them the ability to make the decisions. (A2D2)

Similarly, supervisors talked about motivating staff by creating a supportive environment:

I see my role as supporting the staff to allow them to do their jobs. In a sense I take care of them, I make sure that all of the structures they have are in place...and I hope that transfers into the whole team, so we all start doing that for each other. (A2FG2)

They highlighted mutual investment and providing meaningful activities to engage staff:

I've always called it the "emotional bank" where you're basically helping them through an emotional problem...making deposits...but then down the road when you need to withdraw from that, they're willing to do it for you...it is a 2-way street. (A2FG2)

If there is a project happening...there's some people (interested), I will throw it out there...It gives a buffer...it also helps to keep wellness up because it keeps people engaged...You need to have that challenge...that mentoring support. (A2FG1)

Supervisors also mentioned being strength based, positive, supportive and encouraging, mentoring and coaching staff (A2SQ).

In agency #3, directors and supervisors also strove to motivate staff. Their focus was more on work achievement, although some mentioned relationship aspects:

I motivate through mutual energizing around tasks or developments...I'll let her (supervisor) just talk about what she imagines we could do differently or better...that DOES energize her, but at the same time it gets the job done really well. (A3D3)

You want to create a context where people are feeling, 'Yeah, I contributed, I did a good job'...It really comes down to a good understanding of the team members, of the goals that need to be achieved, how people feel, what does motivate them. (A3D2)

If staff come up with something they want to try I say 'GO!'... everyone has different strengths that they bring to the team, and as a supervisor you allow them to do what

they're good at. (A3FG1)

Supervisors focused on building staff strengths, helping staff to develop their best and asking questions to promote their own conclusions (A3SQ). Notably, one director viewed the ability to motivate others as a foundational leadership skill:

In our sector, having the ability to motivate and energize people is an absolutely critical skill...there's an unending series of grim, depressing news to share...It becomes absolutely critical to keep people focused on the future...creating a structure around people that allows to them stay focused and passionate about the work. (A3D1)

In agency #1, although a sole voice, one director did speak about mentoring staff and they recommended doing this more formally:

I see it as my role to support them (staff) in their personal development...I do it (mentoring staff) informally...as an agency we should identify that more...we each do it with particular staff, but it's not coordinated and it's not formalized (A1D3).

This mentoring included motivating staff towards leadership positions:

We look for it all the time...within the leadership team, we certainly like it when we see people who demonstrate leadership...You don't have to be in a supervisory role to be a leader...and I would like to see our staff routinely seeing themselves more as leaders and seeing opportunities to demonstrate and take initiative. (A1D3)

Supervisors also spoke about motivating staff through a personal approach, “getting to know them as a person, not just as a worker” (A1FG1), knowing their needs “some people are very self-motivated, and they might be offended at you trying to cheerlead them on...so it's knowing what people's needs are” (A1FG2); supporting them, “acting as a buffer sometimes or interpreting management decisions to your staff...running interference for workers” (A1FG2);

and professional development “developing their knowledge and skills...gives them added motivation and they start to see that they can be a change agent” (A1FG2). Several supervisors also noted being collaborative, supportive and available, having an open door, and helping workers to be their best, although this was challenging given the heavy workload (A1SQ).

5.6 Building Trusting Relationships

This area was a common theme in all three agencies. Directors described how they built relationships with staff through genuine interest and caring; this was especially pronounced in agency #2. Trust was considered foundational to relationships, although it was a concern for one director. Participatory and empowering leadership approaches endorse building relationships, trust and safety with staff (Hardina et al., 2007). Directors and some supervisors also built relationships through personal connections, being visible and accessible, and working together with staff. Balancing professional boundaries and personal relationships was also noted.

Relationships and trust. Several directors described how relationships were foundational to their leadership practice:

Modeling how to have those conversations and building a relationship with these people.

Let's face it, if you don't have a relationship with people, you're going to die on the vine here; this is a relationship-based place. (A2D1)

(Relationships) it's one of my cornerstones...it's genuine, there's no shadow side of this for me...I make strong connections to the people that report to me...I try to be engaging ...staff need to feel like senior managers want to spend the time with them. (A3D3)

I'm grounded in developing good supportive relationships...any relationship is like a bank account...continuing to invest in it because there's times where you're withdrawing

in that relationship and always needing to keep in the positive. (A3D2)

Trust was also considered foundational to relationships, although a lack of trust and respect with former colleagues was a concern for one director:

You can only have influence if the trust is there in the first place...People have to think of you as a trustworthy kind of person, reliable, predictable, all of those qualities that go with it before you can have influence. (A3D1)

There are a few people who don't think that I ever deserved this job and that gets in the way of me feeling like I can build a real relationship with people because I feel like there's a certain lack of trust on their part. (A1D2).

In agency #1, some directors achieved these relationships by demonstrating interest and caring about staff's personal lives, and being genuine was key:

I try to have conversations with people about things other than work too, so I make a point of saying hi to people, being informal with them at times...you have to have a relationship with people, take interest in them and it needs to be genuine. (A1D3)

For me the most important part of my leadership practice is probably to be genuine.

People know that...they know that I genuinely care about everybody that works here, about the work of this organization and about the community. (A1D4)

In agency #2, these efforts were quite pronounced. For example, during informal observation, one director sat alongside staff in the lunchroom, expressing genuine interest in their work and personal lives and humbly sharing their own experiences:

I've been able to retrieve those things (details about staffs' lives), and is that strategic?

Yes it is, but it also is borne out of genuine interest, so I can have those conversations with people when I'm sitting in the lunch room with everybody. (A2D1)

Similarly, another director took time to establish personal connections with staff:

I'll stop at the door and say good morning... if one of my staff says 'oh something's happening to me in my personal life', I will take the time and listen, because they're not going to mention that to me unless they feel it's good that I know that. (A2D4)

Supervisors also highlighted the family culture of the agency and genuine caring toward staff:

The culture here of collectivity...there is a sense of family, we REALLY do care about each other, when something bad happens in somebody's life you feel that caring very openly from your colleagues and from staff...we get to know things about their lives and their families and they get to know us as people and it is a relationship. (A2FG1)

Several supervisors commented on this caring family atmosphere, respectful relationships, being compassionate, available and responsive, and having an open door (A2SQ).

Personal connections, being visible. While not as pronounced, supervisors in agency #1 and #3 mentioned building relationships with staff through personal connections and having fun:

We all spend a lot of time getting to know the teams that we work with on a professional and personal level, then when you need to call upon them, or when you're giving direction or praise, you can do it in a way that means something to THEM. (A3FG1)

Being friendly and being interested and able to have fun. There are times when it doesn't have to be all work, be able to just have a conversation or sometimes a laugh. (A1FG2)

Several directors also made an effort to be visible and accessible: "if I don't make those attempts to be out there, people would never see me...so I guess it's about being visible and accessible" (A2D1); and "I still go around every day and say hi to people, the message being that I'm accessible. The only time I close my door is when I am having a meeting in here" (A1D1). This included being present in their conversations with staff, "find some common ground with

people, be present when you're speaking to them, give them opportunities to seek you out" (A3D4). Some directors also mentioned connecting with staff through working together, "we do get to know one another by doing the WORK and the discussion for sure" (A2D4), and:

Contact, working together on things, recognition, confidence in them and their abilities, autonomy...people need to know that the leader is in their corner and is there for them, and sharing myself with people...that we are in this together. (A3D2)

Maintaining boundaries. Some directors and supervisors in agency #2 also emphasized the professional nature of their relationships with staff and the need to maintain boundaries:

We've talked about our relationship and how this is different. I don't socialize with my peers, I will attend agency functions but I don't attend other activities. (A2D3)

It's a professional relationship, I certainly like to know about their kids...and I certainly share that about my child, but definitely the workplace is where it stops. (A2FG2)

Other directors learned to balance being professional with being real with people:

As a leader of an organization there are boundaries, but some of these people I've known for over 25 years...so you need to recognize and honor those connections too. (A2D1)

People want you to be the boss and they want you to be professional, but they want you to have a smoke with them too, so it's how you balance those two things. (A1D4)

5.7 Strength-Based Teamwork

There were both common and contrasting themes in this area. Teamwork was considered foundational in all three agencies and teams are a primary way of achieving agencies' work (Lewis et al., 2012). Some directors and supervisors also emphasized a strength-based approach and mutual support; enabling others to act through teamwork and collaboration is an identified

leadership characteristic (Holosko, 2009; Kouzes & Posner, 2007), Directors in agency #1 and #3 described a strong senior leadership team, while some expressed concerns about their supervisor teams. In contrast, supervisors in these agencies revealed the challenges of a middle management position and this issue was also acknowledged in one director's feedback of themes.

Teamwork foundational. Directors in all three agencies emphasized that teamwork is critical to leadership and organizational functioning and is a primary way of working:

Teamwork is EVERYTHING! A team is much stronger than an individual person, so everybody on the team brings certain skills and strengths to the table...every part of this organization is about TEAM. (A2D2)

There is no such thing as good leadership without good followership...So teamwork for me is terribly important. We continuously emphasize it here that productivity is a result of a collective effort, but rarely individual. (A3D1)

Teamwork is really important because if you want to have any kind of real meaningful change in an organization you need people to work together and you need people to find common ground together, think together, find that synergy. (A1D2).

In agency #2, this focus on effectiveness through teamwork was supported by the agency value "there's no 'u' in win'; no 'I' in team!"

Some directors in agency #3 also noted the importance of being strength based, "creating an environment that each person can utilize their greatest strengths and also be aware of blind spots...the right set of skills, talents and attitudes" (A3D2) and balancing everyone's strengths on the team:

The interactions are very collegial that respect the strengths of people in the team, takes

account of the limitations of people on the team, and brings it together in such a way that the limitations are minimized and strengths are maximized. (A3D1)

Supervisors in agency #1 noted building mutual support in teams and parallel process:

You want that team to work well together, and sometimes you've got a team that's fairly cohesive and sometimes it's helping them to move in that direction, but being able to support them so they can support one another. A1FG2

It's a parallel process...when the supervisors are functioning at a high level as a team...then we know each other better, we recognize our strengths and areas we're not so great at, and we give each other breaks. A1FG1

Supervisors also mentioned involving and problem-solving with team members, supporting and trusting them, and dealing with issues together (A1SQ).

Senior teams. Directors in agency #1 described a positive shift in their ability to work respectfully together as leadership team, with the new senior management team structure:

We've worked really hard (with)...this new structure, to try and really cultivate the individual working relationships that we have with one another...for the purposes of providing stronger leadership to the organization. (A1D4)

There were good things before but there were personalities and structure that really prevented us from working together as a team...it feels like there is a real opportunity now for us to work together as a team and it feels respectful. (A1D3)

Similarly in agency #3, directors described a strong, experienced and respectful senior management team process:

Well from a leadership TEAM perspective, (agency) actually has a wonderful example of

senior leadership team...we bring a lot of experience...hopefully a lot of wisdom...we've learned to be patient when we have to make tough decisions. (A3D3)

At the senior level we all manage that process fairly well...there's a respect for each other and we know each other's styles very well. We have open communication, so we're able to challenge each other. We certainly have disagreements respectfully. (A3D4)

The strength in agency #3's senior team echoed directors' earlier comments that they work well together; they acknowledged they were different, did not always agree, but had similar values and had developed a trusting and honest relationship (informal consult, April 1, 2014). This relationship was evident during the observation of the senior management meeting, as the directors appeared comfortable, close and supportive, using humour with one another. Their discussions were respectful; they listened to one another, agreed and disagreed, suggested alternatives, and honestly shared their views and frustrations on issues (observation, April 1, 2014). In contrast, some directors indicated that their biggest challenge was the supervisory team. They perceived different levels of supervisory knowledge and skills and the need for clear expectations (informal consult, April 1, 2014). During the full management meeting, the directors and supervisors were observed to interact informally; the supervisors were paying attention, participating in discussion, seemed engaged and comfortable to frankly question directors. Interestingly, supervisors described their supervisory team quite positively. They perceived challenges related more to dealing with staff performance issues and team conflict.

Middle management position. Teamwork was a strong theme for supervisors as well. A unique theme that supervisors raised was being in a middle management position:

Being a leader is also being part of a team, you've got people both above and below to have conversations with...I call it the baloney position, sometimes you have mustard on

one side and salt on the other, because you have to hold your ground. (A2FG1)

What gets complex is we're on 2 teams, so we're part of the supervisor team, then we show leadership for our own team. So sometimes those 2 collide...It can be an art, I don't think it's an easy task when you talk about building teamwork. (A1FG1)

The challenge for supervisors was balancing their team and agency needs:

Being part of this larger team, we all are advocates for the team we're working with as well, learning how to balance what your team needs are along with the larger agency, and the point where they all fit together, where puzzle pieces fall. (A2FG1)

You have to have the team atmosphere and yet so much of what the workers do is individual...Were all part of different teams, but our teams are required to work together to make sure the whole machine is moving forward. (A1FG2)

This included striving to build a unified team and managing a dual role:

There's a lot of different layers to the team aspect...our focus is on establishing a good working relationship for the team...we all have to work TOGETHER...it's a real challenge to try and make sure that everybody is connected. (A2FG1)

You're trying to keep them (staff) close enough...which takes a bit of getting along together... versus now we need to hold them accountable for a bunch of stuff. (A1FG1)

Striving to build a unified team was discussed during an observation of a supervisor team meeting in agency #2. The director noted that staff were "back to old drifts between units" and supervisors were encouraged to take a proactive role in addressing these issues.

5.8 Managing Authority and Conflict

Directors and supervisors strove to manage the authority in their role by being aware of and comfortable with their positional power, using authority cautiously for serious situations when deemed necessary, and balancing their authority with supporting staff. Managing authority by empowering staff, reducing hierarchy and sharing leadership with teams is compatible with empowering and servant leadership approaches (Hardina et al., 2007). Directors and supervisors also strove to manage conflict by accepting and embracing it and developing collaborative strategies, although some disliked conflict. Dealing with conflict through collaboration is compatible with feminist perspectives of leadership (Hardina et al., 2007).

Managing authority. Directors underlined the significance of being aware of their positional power “be clear around your authority...aware that just by virtue of the position, there’s power with it” (A3D2) and being comfortable with this role, “being a director, I definitely have authority, what I say is key and how I say it, so I have to get comfortable with that” (A2D3). Some directors described a delicate balance to manage this power, recognizing the impact of their power on others:

The thing with managing power is that you have to be comfortable with power...while at the same time not overusing it, not getting too comfortable with it...Being able to work with power in a way that still helps people and the organization move forward. (A3D1)

For the most part I feel comfortable with the authority that comes with this role, and I recognize how important it is to treat that delicately, because you can really impact people in either a positive or negative way. (A1D4)

That (authority) is really important...it impacts on the learning culture, on safety, on how people feel. If you constantly remind people that you're working in a hierarchy...that would just not feel like a good place to work. (A1D3)

Similarly, in agency #2 some supervisors noted the shift in relationships that occurs with their authority and they strove to create comfort with this change:

Becoming a manager, one of the costs is the kind of relationships you formerly had with people who were colleagues...there's a distancing; there's conversations you can't have and shouldn't have...while at the same time trying to maintain friendships. (A2FG1)

The tricky part for me is creating an environment where the staff I supervise are comfortable with that (authority) also...if there is an issue, then I will deal with it. If it's uncomfortable, then I'm going to be uncomfortable dealing with it. (A2FG2)

Supervisors also noted a preference for a collaborative approach, influence over authority, seeking staff input and encouraging staff leadership and autonomy (A2SQ).

Some directors spoke of using their authority cautiously, depending on the situation:

I try not to use it (authority) very often; most people seem to appreciate that. If I didn't ever do it, it would be a problem. There are times I just have to say 'here is where we are going. Try not to though, I do actively resist it. (A1D1)

It's hard in a position like this not to use your authority sometimes. You have to remind yourself, 'is this one of those times when I need to use it or can I sit back?'...there's this constant pressure to get myself or (director) to make the decision. (A1D3)

Other directors and supervisors discussed using their authority as a last resort, preferring to transfer their authority to others and relying on their relationships with staff:

I prefer not needing to have to exercise authority; that to me is sometimes a last resort ...I'm a big believer in delegating and giving people authority where they have the resources and the skills to do it. (A2D4)

I don't like to use that (authority) unless I have to...very often, you're in a relationship with somebody and if you've been talking about things and addressing things, you'll be able to work together to get to that solution. (A1FG2)

However, directors recalled situations that required them to use authority and make hard decisions:

There are times when you have to...make the tough calls, and people need to know that there's somebody who can do that. So it's not about always working as a community to try and figure out a solution to a problem, sometimes you have to act quickly. (A2D1)

Especially in this role, but in any leadership role, it's really important to demonstrate that you can use your authority when you need to but that you're not wielding it around like it's a stick. (A1D3)

I'm quite comfortable when I have to exercise legitimate authority...I figure right is right...and my experience with that is that MOST people tended to respect me more when I was just honest and truthful with them. (A3D3)

Similarly, some supervisors discussed using their authority for specific situations, emphasizing that approach matters:

Using authority in performance management or just getting the tasks done...if you have the underlying respect, then you can give that kind of message...Even my most experienced staff...quite like to have someone to help them prioritize. (A1FG2)

It's really important that when you are using authority, that you are doing it calmly and thoughtfully. Because there could be times that you're just so angry, you have to make sure that you're approaching it professionally as opposed to being reactive. (A1FG2)

Supervisors also mentioned holding staff accountable and responsible for quality assurance, policies and procedures, agency mandate, setting and managing expectations (A1SQ).

Some directors and supervisors also emphasized balancing their authority with supporting staff, “it depends on the situation, there are times I engage in collaborative problem-solving and team building, there’s times I’m directive” (A1FG2). Others explained:

That's something that the child welfare sector really helps you to do...you have to develop skills to balance that authority when you're a supervisor, so you need to be able to be supportive of your team but at the same time hold them accountable. (A1D4)

The phrase that I like...about me as a leader...‘You’re my backup, my giddyup and my woeback’...There are really times that you have to say, ‘this is not okay, we have targets and you're falling behind’...so that's the giddyup...then there’s the woeback...‘how exhausted are you getting, what do we need to do to manage this?’ (A2FG1)

Managing conflict. Several directors spoke of expecting and accepting conflict; some even viewed it positively, as a potential opportunity for change:

We’re in the conflict business, child welfare, most people don't like us. So, I think we’re pretty good at that actually....part of it is just admitting you live in a conflict world, expect it, embrace it, because from conflict can come some really cool things. (A1D1)

My growth has really been to just stay centered and to expect it...If you can predict when there's going to be conflict or differences...then you can be calm about it. (A2D1)

I don’t view conflict necessarily as a bad thing, I think conflict can bring energy...trying to understand what’s creating that...and working together...if its worked through well, it can be a strengthening aspect for a team, for an organization. (A3D2)

Some directors also discussed strategies for managing conflict, such as listening to others and striving for mutually beneficial solutions:

I try and prevent it (conflict) from happening in the first place...a lot of my leadership style is a collaborative teamwork approach. I spend a lot of time listening, so that if I can prevent conflict from occurring that's what I'm going to do. (A1D4)

I just try to look at all sides...it's always about asking the right questions and making sure everybody's heard...being present in the moment and being mindful of things that may not be an issue for me, but meaningful for the staff. (A3D4)

Similarly, some supervisors managed conflict by addressing issues directly and encouraging staff to do so with each other:

We might not always agree, but we're open to try to talk about it (conflict) and see where we can get to, as hard as that might be and scary at times, because you don't know what that is going to do to the relationship. (A2FG1)

We try and encourage people to work it out with each other...people generally try and have good working relationships and will talk things through. (A1FG1)

You give them the opportunity and I find most of the time just having the conversation ...both parties tend to be a little more aware of each other, so that when they are working together they're not saying something that is going to set each other off. (A2FG2)

Some directors acknowledged that conflict could be challenging, depending on the situation:

The tough ones are complaints about staff and community organizations that don't like what you are doing...managing the board is always full of conflict, because they're really good minded people, but you actually don't want them to be doing your job. (A1D1)

Some (staff) will actually use methods that create more of it (conflict) because they think that it will get to a different result overall...I don't feel that certain methods really lift us up, I think certain things bring us down. (A3D2)

Some directors and supervisors admitted they disliked conflict, and they managed it through practice, gathering information and being prepared:

I deal with it (conflict) a lot...it's probably the hardest thing for me to do, because I like people to be happy and I really don't like conflict...there's a perception of me that I don't mind managing it and that I'll tackle it head-on. (A1D4)

That's hardest for me, conflict. I would like everyone to just play nice and get along. It's uncomfortable for me when I have to deal with conflict...but I'm getting better at it...just practice and having the relationship. (A1FG2)

I'll get into it (conflict) when I need to...When I'm going into a situation that is going to be difficult I try to make sure I'm well researched and I know my information. (A3D4)

Others focused on the work, striving to remain objective:

I don't see the point in getting emotions into it (conflict), when I give someone feedback, it's not a reflection on THEIR personality; it's a reflection on their work. It's not personal, as much as you tell someone that it doesn't always feel that way. (A1D5)

When we talk about conflict between us and somebody we're supervising, from a leadership perspective, I think that always, the onus is on us to be objective in our evaluation of somebody's work. (A1FG2)

5.9 Summary

In summary, leadership conceptualization was an area of strength in all three agencies. Directors and supervisors demonstrated knowledge of ideal leadership practices found in the literature. They described various leadership approaches in their practice, including servant, situational and participatory leadership to some degree. They upheld several core leadership characteristics from the literature as ideal in their practice. These included: shared and achievable visions; role modelling through their behaviour, language, values and beliefs; positively influencing others through their position and personal interactions, and motivating others through mentoring and coaching; building trusting relationships through genuine interest and caring of others, visibility, working together, and balancing professional boundaries; strength-based teamwork, especially in the directors' groups; awareness of positional power, using authority cautiously and managing conflict. There were some challenges noted regarding teamwork at the supervisory level and managing conflict in difficult situations. While these leadership characteristics were endorsed as ideal, there were some discrepancies in their actual leadership practice, which will be discussed further in Chapters 7-9. The question arises as to why this discrepancy between ideal and actual leadership practices existed? This query will be partly answered in the following chapter about the external context, which was exerting a negative influence and significantly constraining directors' and supervisors' leadership practice.

Chapter 6: Impact of the External Context

In the previous chapter, the question was raised as to why a gap existed between director's and supervisors' ideal and actual leadership practices. The purpose of this chapter is to partly answer this query by presenting the external context, which was exerting a negative influence on organizational culture and significantly constraining leadership practice. The themes from this chapter pertain to the last research question about factors that hindered desired leadership practices and organizational processes. The external context was an area of significant challenge for these agencies and brought bad news: continuous funding constraints, increased ministry demands, reduced community relationships, and a crisis in succession planning were having a major impact on programs and services, and in some cases threatened agency viability. Directors were preoccupied with these challenges, which negatively impacted their leadership practice and organizational culture. Each of these areas is discussed below, along with the common and contrasting themes that arose, due to the unique challenges each agency faced.

6.1 Funding Constraints

There were some common themes of continuous funding cutbacks and scarce financial resources, resulting in a negative service impact for all three agencies. In agency #3, the issue of scarce financial resources was most pronounced. This included the threat of program closures due to declining occupancy and legitimate concerns about agency viability. These financial pressures were coupled with a lack of increase to base budget and reduced demand for residential services by child welfare:

We budgeted for 95% occupancy, and some of our programs are down in the high 60's... we're trying to do more marketing... if that doesn't work there might be a program closure...it is a concern, if this is a long-term trend, what's going to happen? (A3D5)

Lately almost every year since I've been here, 'we are in financial disarray, we're going under, we're going to close programs' and then miraculously we manage to balance the budget, it's really hard to reconcile in your head how that happened. (A3FG1)

Some of our programs are OPR (fee for service) programs...It's not like base-funding with some of the ministry programs...children's aid are all cutting back...the dollar is kind of driving it right now. If you're charging 300 and another agency is charging 240, the kids going there. (A3D5)

These significant financial constraints and possible program closures were confirmed both in management minutes (2013-2014) and observations of meetings (April 1, 2014). CMHO (2015c, 2013) also confirms that the children's mental health residential service system is in crisis, with reduced beds and lack of planning across the province, and a chronic lack of inflationary funding in base budget (8% since 1992). Agency #3 submitted a budget to the ministry that indicated 20-30% lower client occupancy rates than required for sustainability. There was a strategic focus to the director and supervisor discussions, including the financial threat to agency viability, the possibility of program closures, selling one of the agency properties, developing a hybrid model, a market environment scan for services, and the need to be competitive and demonstrate value (minutes, 2013-2014). The agency was reducing expenditures where possible to maintain a balanced budget (informal consult, April 1, 2014); however, the sale of one property subsequently proceeded as part of the strategic plan. Diminishing clinical and fiscal resources were impacting program quality (Accreditation Report, 2009) and residential properties were aging, requiring investment in maintenance (Strategic/operational plan, 2014-2015). Discussion about costly facility renovations occurred during

observed meetings. CMHO (2014, 2015c) confirms that higher building maintenance costs and staff wages, along with reduced government funding, has compromised client service capacity.

Agency #3 was unionized and this contributed to their financial constraints. They were facing union challenges regarding previous pay equity payments (Strategic/operational plan, 2014-2015). Their collective agreement was due to be renegotiated and they expected this to be a challenging process due to their restrained financial circumstances (informal consult, April 24, 2014). Given the union climate, supervisors were feeling vulnerable. They expressed a legitimate fear the agency might go on strike and the ministry would shut them down:

We have negotiations coming... the union is going to ask for more money and there isn't any...My honest fear is if we go on strike then they'll close us down...The ministry is looking to cut places down so wouldn't it be easiest to look at people picketing? (A3FG1)

Supervisors did appear burdened, showing low morale and sighs regarding funding constraints and upcoming ministry expectations and changes (observation, April 1, 2014).

While not as pronounced, agency #2 was also experiencing a shift to financially driven service decisions. Directors discussed the reality of scarce financial resources, "that's daily, the budget and the OPR, if the money doesn't come in, it affects staff's livelihood" (A2D2). This required constant vigilance, "financial resource management is just very critical here" (A2D4). Some directors and supervisors described a shift from a people focused to a financial focused culture, with a negative impact on staff and services:

I recognize sometimes we make decisions based on money and I don't believe in that...I would much (prefer to) stand firm on the principle, not on the money, but everything comes at a cost, and sometimes we end up negotiating that with ourselves. (A2D3)

I have seen a move to our decisions being very financially driven...in the last five years it

seems to be the ultimate deciding factor. We're talking about...how do we continue to do the same services with less resources? (A2FG1)

The ministry gives us money, but they don't give us a lot, and we're always falling behind in salaries, it discourages people from getting in the field. (A2FG2)

CMHO (2016) recognizes the need for additional funding to improve service quality and retain staff through raised salaries. Similar to agency #3, external factors such as the child welfare budget reductions noted above were having a ripple effect on agency #2:

The biggest external force that affects what I do is what's happening with the children's aid societies. They've had dramatic reductions in their budget...they're no longer going to support any external treatment for the children who are in their care. (A2FG2)

These concerns about financial resources were also observed during meetings in agency#2. Directors' discussions centered on problem-solving finances, priority setting around operational and program issues, budget preparation for the board, and negotiation with other service providers. Similarly, supervisors discussed reduced funding including OPR (fee for service) beds, increasing complexity of child welfare referrals, and the impact on staffing and service waitlists. These concerns about fluctuating requests for OPR residential care, and increased service demands that stretched agency resources, were reinforced in the Accreditation Report (2011). As the OPR funding represented one third of the agency budget, inconsistent demand for these services was having a negative impact (informal consult, March 19, 2014). For this agency, the current pressures around funding reflected the larger systemic issue that children's mental health agencies had not received any ministry funding increase for the past fifteen years, despite growing service demands (meeting minutes, Nov. 2013; Accreditation Report, 2011; CMHO, 2013). While there was some targeted funding for new positions in 2011-

2012, this did not include funding for administrative support (informal consult, April 10, 2014). The impact of funding constraints on client services, including long waitlists, lack of resources, and the need for more outreach and services was confirmed in the Accreditation Report (2011). These issues are reinforced by CMHO (2016), who is advocating for increased funding to improve service access and coordination and reduce service wait times.

Balanced budget legislation, staff layoffs. Financial pressures were also prominent in agency #1 (child welfare). The Ministry of Child and Youth Services (MCYS) recently introduced balanced budget legislation and a new funding formula for child welfare agencies across the province, with new regulations for accountability agreements between the Board and MCYS (2012-2013 Annual Report). Some directors emphasized the impact of the broader political context and the uncertainty of ministry funding:

Certainly the directions of the ministry and what happens in a political context have a huge influence on us. The best example of that is how we've needed to change our budgeting practices and our conversations around money with the balanced budget legislation. (A1D4)

We're being promised multiyear funding commitments so that we can make changes... but you know you're working in political system... If they stick with their commitment, we'll be okay over time... they never have before... like we are going up again this year, but by 0.8% or something, it doesn't even cover our increased costs. (A1D1)

They described the reality of coping with this change:

Some of the shifts with the ministry and the way that they funded child welfare over the last couple of years have really taken a lot of time and attention and last year (2013) was a bit of a blur because we were responding to funding crises the entire year. (A1D3)

OACAS (2014) upholds this reality, noting that the ministry's change agenda is "extensive and aggressive" (p.4). Other directors highlighted the positives of the new funding formula, as it required them to work within a set budget, and carefully plan spending decisions:

Having that structure has really forced us to be very mindful about how we're spending money...it will further encourage us to link spending in a more strategic way...be really purposeful in our spending in terms of linking it to our service management plan. (A1D4)

Agency #1 also faced a financial deficit, similar to most child welfare agencies across the province (Brotten, 2010). They were required to present a balanced budget to MCYS, in order to receive transitional one-time funding, resulting in staff layoffs in fall 2013 (meeting minutes, Oct. 2013). In response, directors problem-solved the best areas to reduce funding without impacting staff and services. They described facing hard choices with the budget:

Most of the cuts ushered came out of corporate services or management, and that's just because our service volumes were high... It's a difficult challenge for us...we went from 3.5 receptionists to one in the whole agency. (A1D1)

We went through a layoff period in 2010 so it's like the second time in three years. It was difficult and we had to make some really tough decisions last year and say goodbye to people that were really hard to say goodbye to. (A1D3)

One director shared the personal impact of budget cuts on them:

I feel really personally bad about that...it's been personally quite challenging for me at times because I look at people and I think, I can't stop what is coming our way. (A1D1)

Compounding this situation, agency #1 had faced continuous budget cutbacks and staffing reductions. One director explained, "we've had to shrink every year that I've been here ...eight years in a row...so it's not like restraint is new to us" (A1D1). Supervisors confirmed this

trend, “we’ve had HUGE cutbacks ...probably about 8 years ago we had TONS of supervisors ...NOW, it’s just been narrowed and narrowed and our senior management as well” (A1FG2). Supervisors were resigned to the reality of funding cutbacks, “every year, it’s like ‘we have a deficit, is the ministry going to fund us or are they not’ ...I kind of don’t react to that stuff anymore” (A1FG1). Supervisors also recognized these reductions had taken a toll on staff, “there were job losses for staff, so they all have to compensate for one another...(working) harder, impacts morale” (A1FG2).

Some directors viewed the cutbacks positively, as a chance to restructure services, “we tried to use the reductions as opportunities to reorganize things...actually making decisions that were in keeping with the direction we wanted to go” (A1D3). Continuous improvement was the goal, “I think we have tried as best as we can, when we take something apart, to build something better” (A1D1). However, supervisors reported having little influence over these decisions, “we just get the message from senior management about the ministry conversations; we’re never directly involved in that” (A1FG1). As well, some supervisors wished for these challenges to be genuinely acknowledged:

It would be nice to just hear, ‘that’s horrible’ instead of ‘and now we have an opportunity for growth’ because it just feels, not genuine. No, it sucks, having less people in the mix to do the work! (A1FG2)

Innovative responses. The directors in agency #1 and #3 viewed these funding challenges as opportunities to demonstrate innovation through fundraising and social entrepreneurship activities. According to Germak and Singh (2010), the need for social work leaders to embrace social entrepreneurship, or creative solutions through business innovation, is one way for agencies to successfully respond to current funding challenges. This will require

social work leaders to develop business skills and to venture into more risk-taking activities. For example, in agency #1, directors fostered innovation through fundraising in response to the ministry cutting their community development workers:

We created a fund development program...that was one of the impetuses because the board really had to struggle with that question, do we retract, do we just do what we're told or do we still believe in this, we just have to find a different way to do it? (A1D1)

This fund development program involved a 'Children First Campaign' with \$400,000 raised in private donations for neighbourhood prevention programs, permanency planning, and post-secondary tuition assistance for youth in care (Annual Report, 2012-2013).

Similarly, in agency #3, given the threat of program closures, directors were considering joint service delivery with child welfare agencies and had presented a proposal to them. They also discussed social entrepreneurship opportunities, such as shifting to a new community service model, finding out of province placements, providing external training, marketing their services through agency brochures and their website, and raising the professional profile of their programs (minutes, 2013-2014; Strategic/operational plan, 2014-2015). An example of these attempts to innovate occurred during the observation of the senior management meeting, when directors problem-solved marketing a parent-teen group with community partners. These types of efforts were continuous and had been previously commended, as an "entrepreneurial spirit provides benefits to fiscal health of the organization" (Accreditation Report, 2009, p. 6). Even with these innovative approaches, program closures were a probability, and some of these initiatives had been put on hold due to competing priorities (minutes, 2013-2014).

Some directors showed insight about the need for innovation, "I just think our survival is based on our ability to be flexible and innovative" (A1D1) and adaptability to change as critical

to organizational survival:

Change and change management is such a key thing in the organizational world right now...you have to be flexible and change to the needs in your environment and the economics...or you won't survive eventually. (A2D4)

Promoting innovative ideas and adapting to change is a creative response, and it corresponds to a complexity leadership approach (Uhl Bien & Marion, 2011). Other directors highlighted the paradox of achieving this change within static organizational structures:

We talk about the need to continuously evolve and change, and yet organizational structure is all about building in stability, predictability, consistency. So...you design in the components that are going to prevent you from changing. (A3D1)

Given the chronic lack of funding for this sector, one director in agency #3 assumed a big picture perspective, looking for new opportunities to advance the organization into the future:

There's so few people that have their lens on the bigger picture... I'm very pragmatic about the situation...Realistically looking at the future and what's out there, and then seeing the opportunity...it helps to position the whole organization in a manner that will allow it to move forward into the future. (A3D1)

Leaders need to constantly monitor the broader political, economic and social trends (Lewis et al., 2012); this corresponds to an “adaptive leadership” style (Hopkins et al., 2014, p. 20).

6.2 Ministry Directions

The second external area that was having an influence on these agencies was increased ministry demands. Both children's mental health agencies faced some unique challenges, including ministry (MCYS) lead agency system transformation, previous failed amalgamation

attempts and expanded supervisor responsibilities. There were also some concerns around greater ministry expectations and the shift towards a compliance culture.

Lead agency system transformation. Children's mental health agencies in Ontario are currently facing a ministry system transformation agenda that is establishing 34 children's mental health lead agencies (out of 440) across the province of Ontario (MCYS, 2013b). Lead agencies will be responsible for overseeing new service requirements and funding with other agencies in a sub-contracting arrangement. Agencies interested in becoming a lead agency were required to submit an extensive written application to the ministry, and one agency in each region was chosen as lead agency. This application was similar to an accreditation document, with self-ratings about governance and strategic leadership, service expertise and coordination, alignment with MCYS core services, and infrastructure. There were three priority areas that were used as evaluation criteria: organizational preparation and readiness, community engagement and shared visioning, and strengthening the advocacy voice of consumers and stakeholders (informal consult, March 19, 2014, agency #2; observation, April 1, 2014, agency #3).

Both agency #2 and 3 submitted applications to become lead agency during this research project (due March 14, 2014). This application process was reportedly a great amount of work with a short timeline and conflicting ministry directions, and it required the full attention of the directors. The application was a competitive process between agencies; they would be ranked, with a final ministry decision by June 2014 (informal consult, March 19, 2014, agency #2). The waiting period was a time of uncertainty and turmoil, as ministry announcements regarding selection was looming (observation April 1, 2014, agency #3). Agency #2 was subsequently awarded lead agency status for their region, while agency #3 was not successful (emails, Sept. 4 & 6, 2014, respectively). During this time, the directors in agency #3 were concerned about

agency viability and they were actively pursuing ‘big picture’ options, as noted above. This uncertainty was reinforced in the agency’s strategic/operational plan (2014/2015), in terms of future planning and strategy for agency positioning.

During this process, some directors strove for a collaborative approach, “everybody in the province is trying to figure this (lead agency) out and we’re trying to do it...in a win-win kind of way” (A2D1) while others stressed the competitive nature, “we’re in a highly competitive environment here, people don’t like to acknowledge that” (A3D1). This issue was discussed during the follow-up presentations. Directors in agency #2 reflected that the lead agency designation changed their identity, as it set up a hierarchy dynamic with sister agencies and clashed with their collaborative values. In agency #3, viability continued to be an issue and directors were considering whether to collaborate or compete with external community partners.

Regardless of the outcome, directors in both agencies recognized the need to prepare their agency for change:

If we’re selected (for lead agency) it will dramatically change our role in the community’s changing processes over the next number of years. If we’re not, we’ll have to do some reassessing of what it all means to us. (A3D3)

How do we position ourselves best for change? So if we’re not the lead and our services are being subcontracted, how do we make what WE do important, attractive, salable, marketable, how do we keep the work that's happening here first and foremost? (A2D1)

One director expressed concerns about not being chosen as lead agency given past challenges with the ministry:

I don't think we will be selected, we’ve got some history that is not helpful to us, we've had some difficult relationships with them (ministry)...what will become of the

organization if we are not selected as lead agency...I'll be frank with you, I'm very concerned. We've had two amalgamation efforts that have been unsuccessful. (A3D4)

There were varying perceptions about this lead agency change. Some directors seemed open and viewed the change as a positive opportunity, while others were concerned about funding and service implications:

I'm really positive about that (lead agency)...this is a great organization, and I think it will be even greater if it has that kind of opportunity for change...to definitely change our systems, our ways of doing things, that's a good thing. (A2D4)

It's going to be a MAJOR change, the lead agency will be deciding what programs should be offered in your area...are we going to be faced with a situation where lead agency says 'I have this amount of money to spend for these many kids and organization A can provide it 40% cheaper than B, decision made.' (A3D5)

In contrast with the above statements, some supervisors did not anticipate a large change as a result of the lead agency decision, "from the day to day of what we do, I don't expect it to change a huge amount" (A2FG2). Others were concerned about personal implications, "I think it's (lead agency) a job security stress for a lot of folks" (A2FG2).

Some directors were already considering how to prepare for this change, "we have to have a clear vision of our future, and that is definitely shaped by system transformation" (A2D3). This included a focus on their strategic directions, "our strategic vision for this year is to become the best that we can be" (A2D2). They expressed concerns about limited staffing and financial resources to meet ministry data requirements and measurable outcomes:

We don't have many of the resources that we believe are needed in order to make it (lead agency) happen...HR will be huge as will the whole admin finance because we'll be

managing services, and we're one person driven in all those areas. (A2D2)

With all these changes, data collection, (ministry) were right up front, 'there's no money for anything extra, you have to do all this stuff with what you've got now.' (A3D5)

These concerns are warranted, and CMHO (2014) cautions that more human and technology resources will be required to support lead agencies in meeting ministry expectations for quality assurance, data collection and analysis, outcome measurement and program evaluation.

Along with lead agency changes, these children mental health agencies had recently undergone two amalgamation attempts with several partner agencies in their region (2009-2012), which had failed due to a lack of additional government funding (initial meetings, Nov. 27, 2013). According to directors in agency #3, these events had negatively impacted relationships with staff and community partners:

We realized the cumulative macro negative impact of the amalgamation failure that we had no appreciation of, how demoralizing that was to the entire organization. (A3D1)

There have been some personal issues that have burned bridges in the community... there's some bad feelings about some of the amalgamation efforts. (A3D4)

The amalgamation attempt had also resurfaced supervisors' concerns about the loss of senior management presence, and one director in agency #2 struggled with how much information to share with staff about these changes as a result:

When the four agency amalgamation effort was on, the middle management group hardly saw us...there's some realistic concern that the people who they report to at the senior level are going to be unavailable to them again...trying to balance out the knowledge sharing that has to happen...you don't really want to burden everybody, if you can protect

some of your people from it. (A2D1)

This struggle was evidenced during the observation of the all staff meeting in agency #2. The director shared information about lead agency implications candidly while reassuring staff that front-line service positions would not be affected. This director later explained that when impacts on the agency were evident, such as during the previous amalgamation attempt, consequences were openly acknowledged with staff as a “tough time” (informal consult, March 19, 2014).

Supervisors in both agencies confirmed their concerns about the impact of external pressures such as the lead agency restructuring on organizational processes:

It has become a new reality that senior managers just aren't available because there are so many system issues going on...restructuring, higher accountabilities, I don't see the end of it, eventually they'll restructure, but what will be after that? (A2FG1)

There was a time when I felt it was really exciting to be part of the management team... but with everything going fast and furious, fill beds, create new programs, accreditation ...WHAT is our priority? (A3FG1)

It's (lead agency) going to be a real shift, but how to do that in a good way, because if we aren't processing, if we aren't talking together about how to do that and keep staff well, motivated and strong, it might be harder than it needs to be. (A2FG1)

Supervisors elaborated on these concerns, revealing they were burdened by data management and quality assurance pressures. These expanded responsibilities competed with their primary role with staff, and contributed to feeling like “masters of nothing:”

I find myself doing so much data management; it's a requirement that has been built over time...so they (team) will remind me, 'Geez, we haven't seen you lately.' It's like, right,

I've done that email, email, email, and they're just down the friggin' hall. (A2FG1)

I feel kind of stuck without process, how to move along with quality assurance...the participatory, collaborative part is working well, but there's a lot of pressure, a lot of expectations in these changing times, about meeting these deadlines. (A2FG1)

Accreditation, amalgamation, mergers, a lot of things have taken our focus away and the workload continues to increase and my biggest frustration right now is I feel like a MASTER of NOTHING because I'm SO spread out. (A3FG1)

This onslaught of new requirements was also discussed during a supervisor team meeting (agency #2), and supervisors and staff were feeling “run off their feet” due to tracking new processes, the high volume and increased complexity of client referrals. These negative consequences contradicted agency policies around maintaining staff wellness and quality client services. These findings mirror earlier research demonstrating that using a business management approach in human services results in drastic consequences, including increased client service demand and accountability measures along with inadequate staffing and technology resources (Hopkins et al., 2014; Turner & Shera, 2005; Westhues et al., 2001).

Higher ministry accountability. Along with lead agency changes and pressures, these children's mental health agencies were facing increasing ministry demands for accountability, quality assurance, performance indicators, ministry mapping of core services, and external collaboration (minutes, 2013-2014; observation, April 1, 2014, agency #3). This focus is reinforced in the current child and youth ministry transformation framework (MCYS, 2013) and it corresponds to a business management model of leadership (Lawler & Bilson, 2010). Specifically, these demands included shifts in budget reporting, service targets and staffing

allocation, ‘remapping’ of thirteen funding lines and service targets onto nine new MCYS core services, and expansion of required service statistics from four to thirty-five categories (informal consult, March 19, 2014, agency #2). The new mapping process was anticipated to impact staffing, as positions were attached to different funding structures (minutes, March 2014, agency #2). These agencies were required to complete an extensive MCYS service description schedule to receive program funding (observation, April 1, 2014, agency #3).

Directors highlighted these significant ministry changes and acknowledged that the current ministry focus impacted their organizational culture and leadership practice:

What I saw was getting REALLY complicated...We had trouble getting the information for those 6 codes at certain points from staff....now we have to collect 40 different elements. How is this all going to work and be accurate for the ministry? (A3D5)

The ministry is highly risk-averse, so (extensive) policies and procedures...it has a big influence on our culture, micromanagement...the licensing process was a one-day experience...now a team comes into some of the programs over multiple days. (A3D2)

I deal mainly with (ministry)...I’d say this inhibits my leadership practice because the focus is on learning the rules and reporting. I don’t have a leadership role there, I am a liaison between the agency and the main funder. (A2D4)

This focus was discussed during the follow-up presentation with agency #2. Directors stated the ministry process was having a major impact on agency operations, as decisions were being made differently, and directors were learning to push back with the ministry while buffering supervisors and staff. This finding provides further evidence of a continuing trend in human service organizations toward a business management model that focuses on accountability, efficiency and competition for resources (Hasenfeld, 2010a; Germak & Singh, 2010).

In agency #3, to manage the ministry demands for expanded program data elements and reporting of service targets, some directors highlighted the need for increased agency infrastructure resources including IT, finance and program evaluation (initial meeting, Nov. 27, 2013; observation, April 1, 2014). The need to strengthen procedures was reinforced in the Accreditation Report (2009) and they were implementing software training and consulting with other children's mental health agencies (observation, April 1, 2014). Some directors were clear these increased ministry demands threatened agency viability, and more infrastructure resources were required to meet these growing expectations. The need for agencies to absorb operational costs for infrastructure, with a risk to systemic sustainability, is also noted by CMHO (2013).

Supervisors in agency #2 also anticipated a surge of ministry expectations with lead agency changes and forecast the need for leaders with business skills (A2SQ); one supervisor made the decision to retire based on this new reality:

There will be TONS more around measurement, tracking, following best practice and measuring outcomes...much more demand on middle managers to be more community involved and collaborative...Although I'm good with data, and I'm a very strong team leader, I believe there's going to be skills and abilities that I've developed along the way, that are not going to be sufficient for this next phase of children's mental health. (A2FG1)

Another supervisor emphasized the agency being progressive in meeting ministry standards, "look at the new ministry reporting requirements, we're meeting 30 out of 34...we're staying ahead of the curve when the ministry rolls out these changes" (A2FG2). This claim was reinforced in the Accreditation Report (2011), as the agency met 100% of the CMHO mandatory standards for programs, staffing, governance and management. The agency had also developed supports to meet these standards, including: an Information Committee to support daily

functions; an Operations Plan to review organizational priorities and activities (Value Team minutes, see Chapter 7), and a provincial grant to conduct planning and evaluation around clinical practice areas (informal consult, April 10, 2014).

Some directors lamented a ‘compliance culture’ focused exclusively on accountability. They recognized the ministry standards were not founded on evidence and hampered their ability as leaders to foster innovation with staff:

The new standards in place now...almost none of it has anything to do with any evidence ...As we move more and more towards a regulation driven, compliance oriented way of doing business, you leave absolutely no room for innovation and creation, and yet the challenge we face is the need to be more and more creative all the time. (A3D1)

When you think of leadership, you want to unleash people's potential and you want to motivate, you want to draw out the best and give people autonomy, sometimes the autonomy is within those little checkboxes, so that has an influence. (A3D2)

The ministry's focus on standards and accountability and the incongruence with innovation illustrated the complex challenges these directors were facing and the compromises they were required to make to survive in the external context. Unfortunately, this ministry focus is short-sighted: commitment by senior leadership to learning and innovation and opportunities for staff to develop and implement new services and programs, is known to improve service delivery and organizational outcomes (Hopkins & Austin, 2004).

Although a sole voice, one director noted some positive influence related to changes initiated by the ministry “(service) pathways...protocols between agencies...evidence informed practices” (A3D2). This director cautioned being tolerant of ministry directions:

The ministry is easy to kick, but you better be at least in a decent relationship with

them...you don't want to kick the people that can kick harder back. (A3D2)

Another director suggested being attentive to ministry and local changes, striving to understand them and respond strategically:

Keep our fingers on all the activities that are going on in the community or even provincially that inform us...make sense of the situations, get on board with the change...build relationships with key people that are going to inform you. (A3D3)

6.3 Community Relationships

The third area where the external context was exerting an influence on these agencies was community relationships. There were some positive themes around being a collaborative community partner and also some challenges maintaining this presence. As well, in agency #2, a unique theme emerged regarding a community perception of arrogance.

Collaborating with community partners was central in agency #2. Supervisors described mutual relationships based on respect:

In our community (agency) has had a very honoured presence, and RESPECTED, we've been highly respected for our work, which has sometimes given permission to state our opinion with authority and been really heard and listened to. (A2FG1)

This community collaboration was evidenced during observations of director and all-staff meetings. Directors discussed invitations for sister agencies to various events, innovative projects with community partners to improve client service, and interagency communities of practice to coordinate services. These efforts were also reinforced in the Accreditation Report (2011) and agency's values.

Similarly, agency #3 was described as a cooperative and collaborative community partner in community partner surveys (Accreditation Report, 2009). This agency also considered

expanding community initiatives and services (Strategic/Operational report, 2014/2015). Agency #1 had a long-standing practice of partnering with neighbourhood coalitions and collaborating with service partners (Annual Report, 2012-2013). They had developed strong community partnerships, “we are seen as leaders in the community...we’re pretty much at every collaborative table, and I would say our voice is fairly strong at those tables” (A1D2).

There were some challenges with collaboration. Supervisors in agency #2 highlighted time constraints due to competing priorities and the lead agency was also anticipated as a threat to collaborative community relationships:

There is an expectation also to be working more collaboratively with our community. It’s huge...especially at this time when we want to be a lead organization ...to say NO has a really big impact...I’ve had to give up TONS of my committees...I don’t have the same community connection that is also SO valuable. (A2FG1)

This whole lead agency thing is going to change the dynamics because instead of ALL colleagues sitting around as managers of different organizations, one of you will be a lead...we’re going to struggle with issues of power and control. (A2FG1)

In agency #1, some directors acknowledged a reduced community presence during budget cuts. Provincial sector work was also having an impact, as directors were less available in the agency, resulting in downloaded responsibilities for supervisors:

Last year was a tough year but we still continue to be committed to that external work...

There’s still a recognition here that our role in the community is really important and that if we’re absent for a brief period it’s not that we’re pulling away for good, it’s just sometimes you have to take care of business. (A1D3)

I really promote a similar level of presence with our senior staff, encouraging them to participate in provincial initiatives and local initiatives...the biggest challenge is people out of the office, we REALLY have to be careful that were not all out doing this really great work provincially and no one's on site. (A1D1)

If directors can't do something, you're getting sent on to the committee, voluntold, 'guess what? You're on a committee now, we don't have a director to go there anymore', but we've reduced your staff, so now you have to spend more time doing that. (A1FG1)

Community perception of arrogance. A unique theme that emerged with directors and supervisors in agency #2 was a community perception of staff as arrogant, rooted in a history of inequitable funding and staffing resources:

There's a perception that people think we're better than others...we acknowledge what we do and we do great work, we're proud of that, but I don't think we go about boasting it or pretend that we are better in that sense. (A2D3)

I've certainly heard that we were being seen as arrogant all through that (amalgamation) process...Historically, (agency) did get some resources that other people didn't have...we have staff who are more highly trained than in some other agencies. (A2FG1)

Directors responded to this perception in a collaborative manner, sharing resources with the community and keeping their focus on the bigger picture:

So maybe part of this sharing of training, sharing of resources, is a way of not trying to make up for it but try to even it out, it's not about holding it all to yourself. (A2D1)

I'm not just going to do something for this agency, I'm going to do it for the greater good...and I communicate that to the agencies out there, that I'm here to help YOU, and to help US, help the community, it's not about me. (A2D3)

The strength of these partnerships will be critical to their future success: a 'big picture' approach with cross-agency collaboration and developing relationships with key stakeholders are known ways to manage broader system changes (Lewis, Packard & Lewis, 2012).

6.4 Crisis in Succession Planning

The final theme that emerged was a crisis in succession planning for all three agencies. They were anticipating director retirements coupled with lack of internal preparation, staff interest, and/or opportunities for management positions. There were varying opinions about preparing supervisors for these roles. More broadly, sector development was noted.

Crisis in succession planning. Directors and supervisors in agency #2 highlighted a crisis in succession planning with the upcoming retirements of directors:

When we have three major retirements next year, we've got three major holes...it's like we're not built on solid ground, shifting sands...to find master level social workers who want to be so heavily invested in residential services is almost impossible. (A2D2)

We're facing a crisis, with the number of people that are retiring over the next five years, young and enthusiastic people, SOME of whom will want to go into management.

There's also a large group of people who aren't interested. (A2FG1)

Directors recognized a pressing need for succession planning and they were collaborating with community partners:

We've done a pretty good job with our current leaders. What we haven't been able to figure out how to do is to identify leaders outside of the leader group, in terms of

succession planning or preparing for taking on a lead role. (A2D2)

We're trying to figure it out (succession planning)...we're (sister agencies) all facing the same struggle and what can we do as a GROUP?... I haven't been able to act on it yet, but there is the willingness to try and figure this out, not just individually. (A2D1)

This concern about succession planning and lack of replacements for upcoming retirements was also highlighted in an initial meeting with the leadership team in November, 2013. Supervisors agreed the agency was facing a crisis in succession planning. Fewer staff were interested in management positions, and the burden of heavy administrative responsibilities was blamed for this disinterest, although some felt positive about bringing in new managers:

The change administratively in children's mental health, people see the amount of time we spend at the computer...they see people with tons and tons of emails, and we're still doing data management stuff, and that's not why they got into the field. (A2FG1)

I don't actually feel bad that we don't have a whole bunch of staff that want to be managers, it is time for (agency) to take on some new blood...hopefully we'll bring on people with the different kinds of skills than us lions who are retiring have. (A2FG1)

In agency #3, succession planning was discussed as part of the strategic plan during the senior leadership meeting (April 1, 2014). Three of the five directors were planning to retire within the next five years, forcing the need for succession planning. Concern was expressed about promoting supervisors into these positions, given the complexity and skills required (informal consult, April 1, 2014). Supervisors were perceived as lacking the necessary leadership skills and interest in 'big picture' issues that would be required in senior leadership positions, and directors were at a loss to bridge this gap (informal consult, April 24, 2014). As a result,

leaders expressed the need to recruit for these positions externally, looking for those with graduate degrees who would bring new ideas. There was recognition of the need to address this issue systemically, as other agencies would be facing the same crisis. Directors spoke of this unbridgeable gap between supervisors' skills and senior management skills:

What we don't do at all...is developing junior people into senior people. That's a gap that for me is unbridgeable; no leadership development would get us there, because the people we hire for supervisor positions are not the people who are good at senior positions...At the senior level, so much conceptual, holistic thinking is required...working with contradictions and paradoxes, we can't bridge the gap, that's a real struggle. (A3D1)

In agency #1, there was also some concern about limited leadership opportunities for supervisors, risk of leadership lessening, and lack of hiring with leadership in mind:

My biggest concern is that we've actually limited the number of opportunities for people because we've been retracting (positions)...there's nothing to step up to anymore...the worst-case scenario is that people stop demonstrating leadership because this is it.(A1D1)

One thing we don't do well is hiring...we don't articulate leadership qualities...I'm not sure that we are looking for those kinds of qualities in succession planning...We're not hiring people with that bigger picture thinking. (A1D2)

Sector development. One director in agency #3 also highlighted an impending crisis across the sector in succession planning, with a loss of leadership capacity coupled with increasing leadership complexity:

In the next decade there's going to be such a loss with my generation retiring...huge LOSS of enhanced management leadership capacity...In our world it's (leadership) a lot

more imprecise...it's a lot like walking in a fog and in quicksand at the same time. The earth is moving underneath me all the time, I'm trying to keep my footing and keep the goal in mind but it's constantly obscured...It's tremendously complicated so the capacity to even bring in people from the business sector to our work is limited. (A3D1)

This director expressed frustration with the lack of sector investment in leadership development compared to other public and private sectors:

The amount of resources that goes into organizational development, in healthcare, education, government or the private sector, we're surrounded by it...In our sector it's seen as more of a sidebar...That is a real impediment because people don't understand the impact of good leadership...the thinking is that you can be a leader of a multi-million dollar organization and people are just gifted enough that they'll grow into the position, whereas in any other field in society people have to invest learning and training. (A3D1)

Some directors suggested ideal future leaders would be social workers that also had training in business skills, given the complexity of the sector:

I would like it to be social workers with some of the business skills; I don't think it's good the other way around. The business world is so much simpler than our world, it really is, and I think most business leaders would struggle in our world. (A3D1)

There are things in the broader leadership context that would be helpful in the formal training of the social service context. I also believe in integration of both the social work principles and values and then some business technology aspects. (A3D2)

This theme was highlighted during the follow-up presentations in agency #2 and #3. There was discussion on succession planning and the need to have leaders with clinical experience, along with training in business skills.

6.5 Summary

In summary, it is clear from the findings that the external context was having a major impact on all three agencies, and there were several noteworthy themes. Specifically, funding constraints had impacted service decisions, resulting in reduced viability in one children's mental health agency and staff layoffs in the child welfare agency. The children's mental health agencies were facing a lead agency ministry transformation agenda, they had undergone previous failed amalgamation attempts, and they were coping with a ministry compliance culture with increased expectations for accountability and outcomes. As well, while these agencies had a history of collaborative community relationships, maintaining this presence was challenging. Finally, these agencies were facing a crisis in succession planning that was erupting across the sector, resulting in social work leaders needing to develop business skills. Directors were preoccupied with these macro challenges, and downloaded more responsibilities to supervisors. This negative impact will be further discussed in the subsequent three chapters, by examining the interaction between leadership practice and organizational culture in each agency.

Chapter 7: Agency #2 (Children's Mental Health, 0-14 years)

Organizational Culture and Interaction with Leadership Practice

Having reviewed the common themes about leadership conceptualization and ideal practices and the negative impact of the external context in the previous chapters, the purpose of the next three chapters is to discuss the interaction of these factors in relation to the organizational cultures of each agency. As highlighted previously, there was some incongruence between leadership ideals and actual practice on an organizational level. Moreover, the leadership practices, organizational cultures, and extent of leadership development and satisfaction varied considerably among the three agencies. Given the variable findings in this area, the unique themes that arose for each agency will be presented separately in the subsequent three chapters. These themes will reflect strengths, or elements of organizational culture that are consistent with ideal leadership practices; and weaknesses, or elements of organizational culture that are inconsistent with ideal leadership practices. As noted earlier, most of the reported findings in the next three chapters are based on participants' accounts rather than observations of their behaviour.

The focus of this chapter is on agency #2. The organizational culture in this agency was distinguished by several strengths, including its shared mission vision and values, flatter structure, clan culture, continuous learning culture, meaningful staff recognition, open sharing of information, acceptance of mistakes, participatory decision-making, responsiveness to change, strength-based performance management, and investment in leadership development. There were also some issues with the organizational culture and demands from the external context that were negatively impacting leadership practice. The various elements of organizational culture and their interaction with leadership practice will be discussed further below.

7.1 Mission vision values

The mission, vision and values were well documented in this agency. The mission was to help children reach their full potential by “working with the child and family’s unique strengths, needs and culture to prevent or reduce serious emotional problems” and the vision was to “create a caring, emotionally healthy and supportive community” (agency brochure, 2013). The mission, vision and values were considered central to daily practice: “the mission and values, we live and breathe it every day, and it does shape me”(A2D3); “we’re driven by our mission, we have what I believe to be solid values, and the leadership supports both of those in a very positive way” (A2FG2). The mission, vision and values were also tied to client outcomes and staff wellness:

The mission, vision values here...it’s really about helping kids and families reach their best potential, and so why wouldn’t you do that with your staff? (A2D1)

Well, it's critically important to the outcomes we get with kids and families...the better that your staff are trained, the healthier that they feel, the better that your organization is healthy, like it all is connected to kids. (A2D2)

The agency values were quite striking; they were meaningful and shared, having been developed with staff and written in their words. The agency developed a small ‘values card’ stating the mission, vision, values and treatment philosophy. The values emphasized teamwork, shared leadership, constructive conflict resolution, feedback and communication, playfulness, respect for diversity, self-care, positive recognition, staff development, realistic expectations, honesty and integrity. These values were embedded into the agency culture, and directors and supervisors were demonstrating and encouraging them in practice:

We certainly talk a lot in our team meetings...we bring the cards out that have our values on them, what are we doing to continue to live these values...or do it better? (A2FG1)

They're not really our values, they're 'the way we want to be with each other' ...if you're going to work at (agency), we expect you to act in this way, because that's what we expect of ourselves and each other here. (A2D2)

For example, during the observed meeting with all staff, staff were requested to embrace agency values and support their colleagues:

We have our internal values, the little card, and so that was created by everybody at the organization... you heard it at the staff meeting yesterday, the 'all hands on deck?' And I think that has real meaning here. (A2D1)

7.2 Organizational Structure

The organizational structure was a significant factor for this agency. Historically, a previous director attempted to encourage more participatory leadership, through a decentralized structure "He (1st executive director)...brought self-organizing teams...he brought Meg Wheatley (organizational consultant)... it was his influence that brought us to a place of restructuring" (A2D2). Due to the challenges associated with self-organizing teams, directors shifted the organizational structure back to a 'hybrid model' that was decentralized with supervisors and team directors. During this time, there was a quick succession of executive directors (three in five years), according to the directors (initial meeting, Nov. 27, 2013). The current executive director deliberately changed the organizational structure to be flatter and less hierarchical:

I like a more flattened structure and there continues to be some hierarchical structure here of course. There is functionality in this blended model. For new managers, who have previously worked in traditional hierarchical structures, our model can be very challenging to understand. (A2D1)

It's kind of fluid, we're not hierarchical at all, we are really trying to be flat... It's kind of a matrix model. We have the supervisors and we have the clinical team leaders... so we want them to be as we are, interchangeable... We don't really have an org chart... a lot of what makes it work at (agency) is person driven, as opposed to position driven. (A2D2)

This flatter organizational structure was described as a 'matrix model' of different teams and disciplines with a focus on team interaction and communities of practice to support learning and change. This internal shift was purposeful to engage staff interest and provide time for their participation (informal consult, April 10, 2014). A matrix model was an appropriate choice for this purpose, as it is "the most complex and formal way to ensure high levels of integration" (Lewis et al., 2012, p. 108). These groups focused on various continuous quality improvement and clinical service areas and they reported quarterly to a 'value team' committee comprised of a cross-section of management and staff. This value team met monthly and focused on quality assurance, program evaluation (e.g. outcome measures, client satisfaction, staff wellness survey), accreditation, research and professional development (Admin P&P, 1-05, 1-30).

This flatter structure was evidenced during observations of the leadership team, supervisory team, and all staff meetings. For example, the leadership team sat in a small circle together during their meeting and everyone participated freely in setting the agenda and discussion. Similarly, in the supervisor team meetings, staff sat close together, the supervisors were asked for input and most actively participated in discussion. Notably, during the all staff meeting staff sat in a large circle in the gym with the directors and supervisors interspersed, unlike the previous executive director who had staff lined up in rows (informal consult, March 19, 2014). Within this flatter structure, there were some functional routines: the directors, known as the 'leadership' team, met on a regular weekly basis; the full leadership team (directors,

supervisors and team leaders), known as the 'leaderful' team, met on a bi-monthly basis (informal consult, March 19, 2014). Supervisors highlighted the positives of this new structure on their leadership practice:

There's a sense of permission to be a kind of leader much less from the top down and more from beside people....I feel a great sense of permission here to be the kind of leader that I believe in. (A2FG1)

I'm pretty much free to make my own decisions and anytime I need to ask they're pretty open about going and answering it...The big one for me is how to work in a unionized environment....they've been pretty good about helping me navigate it. (A2FG2)

This flatter structure and matrix model was acknowledged as challenging for some directors, who required mentoring to adjust:

It was and still is difficult to grasp, because of this team based way...we could get things done a lot more efficiently if we weren't going through all these committees. That's the negative, but I realize the positive is communication, teamwork, sharing information. (A2D4)

Being able to educate, help coach somebody about, 'you know what, that's not going to change around here, that's part of this place' and helping to decode that for another individual who is new to this field, new to social services. (A2D1)

Supervisors expressed concerns about the management restructuring, as they were burdened with additional responsibilities and forced to withdraw from their own commitments:

There's been a change in our work pace...in (where) our priorities have been...our executive team (directors)...they've had to take a step back, then that (work) gets

downloaded onto the middle management (supervisors) who then end up taking that step back from their teams (staff). (A2FG1)

I've withdrawn from all of the committees I enjoyed sitting on because that time right now has to be in the team...and we have spoken that something needs to change and LITERALLY the response we get is, 'this is the way it is folks.' (A2FG1)

These additional responsibilities were coupled with a lack of director and peer support:

An isolation factor...there isn't any forum for us...so we have to carve out time to process or to check in with each other...We used to have clinical team meetings, we haven't had one in ages...it's just because of the pace and the amount of (work). (A2FG1)

This downloading of responsibilities onto supervisors negatively impacted their ability to support staff and complete their own work:

I believe a HUGE part of my job...is being available to my front-line staff when they need me...if there's more administrative responsibilities put onto me, I have to get that time from somewhere, and where I steal that time is from that. (A2FG2)

I'm closing my door now, I've NEVER closed my door...just to get things accomplished I'm having to close it more and more...I'm just realizing that I'm not getting the major projects done because of the walk-ins. (A2FG2)

This downloading of responsibilities also contradicted the agency values of having realistic expectations of each other and enjoying work, and the agency policy for staff wellness (Agency P&P 1-06).

7.3 Organizational Culture

There were significant historical issues that negatively impacted organizational culture.

These issues related to the previous executive director, whose leadership style did not align with the agency culture during the amalgamation attempt with other community agencies (informal consult, March 19, 2014). The Board of Directors lacked key information during this time and both they and staff were traumatized by this experience. The current ED was required to re-establish trust with the Board and provide debriefing about this process both with management and staff. The agency directors were also required to rebuild their reputation and connection with the community. The current ED described this process as “trial by fire” that no leadership development program could prepare them for (informal consult, March 19, 2014). Another director described this negative impact:

Oh he (4th executive director) almost killed the heart of (this agency)... It was really bad, he didn't understand the values and principles by which we work and pretty much went about trying to destroy everything....He took our strengths and he used them against us!...But he did it in a way that crushed everybody at the agency. (A2D2)

The current executive director was described as pivotal to shifting the organizational culture back to a welcoming tone and creating trust with staff:

They (staff) breathed a sigh of relief when (current ED) was hired full-time... because she was a known entity and we talked a lot about how to help the agency heal and move forward, so everything from being as different as possible from how he was. (A2D2)

(ED) and I are very close and we knew that we had to create a sense of SAFETY for everybody and people felt safe with her and with me... if you did a straw poll of the staff, the majority of the staff would say they trust (ED) as executive director. (A2D2)

Directors described the current culture as cohesive, “this culture is a pretty tightly knit culture...you either fit in the culture or you don't” (A2D1), and “socially it’s a very strong culture and people are very tight... (they) have worked together for decades” (A2D4). This culture included pride in their history:

This place was all about how we provide the best clinical services to the kids that nobody else wants...I had to understand the history and why it mattered....the sense of pride and achievement that people felt. (A2D1)

This cohesive culture was evident during the observations of agency meetings. In the leadership team meeting, directors were open with each other, sharing information freely and listening respectfully. They interacted informally, laughing and joking, and seemed to be comfortable and trusting with one another. Similarly, in both supervisor team meetings, staff laughed and joked with one another, openly and informally discussed issues, supported and challenged each other. Most engaged actively in discussion, honestly shared their feelings, listened to each other, responded readily to questions and seemed comfortable to ask the director questions. In the all-staff meeting, there was also joking between the staff and directors. This informal playfulness with one another supports the shared agency value of “Laugh, play, grow!” (agency values card).

The strong organizational culture was also confirmed in the Accreditation Report (2011) that documented observations of a caring collegial atmosphere, warm reception, pride in work and strong sense of multidisciplinary team at all organizational levels. While the agency culture was cohesive, directors noted there was room to be flexible, “this isn’t a ‘one-size-fits-all’ culture...you have to be creative in how you approach situations ...if this works better, how can we agree as a union group and as a management group?” (A2D1). Supervisors had a similar

viewpoint and described being open and strength-based, “I would say that our agency is strength based not just with clients and families, but we talk about that towards our staff, that's really important to us” (A2FG1).

Consistent with this cohesive culture, one director explained they had fostered a collaborative relationship with the union “its (working together) created this partnership for the most part” (A2D2). For example, the directors and union leaders jointly rewrote the collective agreement and provided joint training for managers and union stewards on how to handle harassment. The directors also strove for fair negotiations “we had tough negotiations, but they were fair, because the union knows that we want a win-win, and if we had a lot more money, we could do different things” (A2D2). This partnership approach to resolving issues with the union was reinforced in discussions, as directors tried to manage issues directly (informal consult, March 19, 2014).

This emphasis on collaboration was also observed during the leadership team meeting. For example, the directors discussed a staff grievance and how to handle situations differently in the future. This approach was also reinforced in the report that most staff were happy with the settled collective agreement (value team minutes, Jan. 2014). This collaborative practice was further supported through the agency’s conflict resolution policy, which stated the goal was a productive problem-solving process, with the ability for staff to refer issues to the management and board (Admin P&P 4-10, 4-15). In practice, front-line staff rarely needed to bring a union representative into supervision meetings and when this did occur, issues were often worked out quickly (informal consult, March 19, 2014).

Supervisors also commented on the history of collaborative problem-solving with the union, although they noted a recent change to involving the union more:

Historically, we've been blessed with union leadership...union stewards being keen to see resolution happening at the ground level, rather than going to an arbitration level ...there has been a shift in their (staff) ability and willingness to have face-to-face conversations and deal with issues as they come up...‘we’re going to involve the union and have the union deal with it FOR us’ rather than teaching those skills. (A2FG1)

The supervisors also expressed concerns about the agency culture shifting in other ways:

Part of the change is going to be the culture change...we cannot continue with the culture we have, that family feeling and work this way...The risk management is going to become so much more significant...To think that there’s more administration coming on top of those things, how you do that? (A2FG1)

The pressures to improve quality assurance, meet data deadlines, and maintain connection were also emphasized on their questionnaire responses. Staff reported feeling stressed for various reasons, including the previous amalgamation attempt, the ongoing busyness of work, the union negotiation, and the lead agency transformation (informal consult, April 10, 2014). On a positive note, this agency had developed a way to measure the pulse of the organizational culture by asking staff about the “emotional climate.” This was observed during ‘check-in’ at the all staff meeting, when directors asked about the emotional climate and staff recognized this term. To capture this emotional tone, anecdotal staff feedback on working conditions was collected on an ongoing basis, and was reviewed as a standing item during the agency value committee meeting (informal consult, April 10, 2014). There was also evidence of discussion and problem-solving around the emotional climate during value team meetings. For example, regarding system transformation, staff were encouraged not to worry and use planning time to “stabilize and strengthen” the agency (value team minutes, July 2013). Similarly, regarding

concerns about union collective bargaining with the union, management was striving to “maintain good working relationships” (value team minutes, Sept. 2013). Further, staff wellness issues were brought forward to the leadership team, as an effective way to keep informed about agency process issues (value team minutes, Jan. 2014).

7.4 Learning Culture

Promoting a culture of continuous learning was a definite area of strength for this agency, as directors described:

So we have all disciplines from all teams...sitting at these (communities of practice) and having conversations about what are we doing, what is the best practice, what do we need to change...It's been a really good way of engaging people at different levels. (A2D2)

The value that was placed on that (learning) internally, how decisions about continuous learning are made here, sometimes how they're prioritized...The learning philosophy here has moved outside these four walls to include other agencies. (A2D1)

Striving to be a learning organization was embedded in agency policies and procedures, through a focus on core competencies, innovation and development of new practices, continuous improvement and service delivery renewal, and communities of practice to support learning and change (Admin P&P, 1-05). Agency support of a learning culture was a strong positive theme for supervisors as well and directors were described as open to feedback, honest, transparent, and supported practice (A2SQ):

We're a learning organization and we're open, and we have only as much hierarchy as we absolutely need to get the job done...I have found that response is quite good about new ideas and being forward thinking, a learning agency. (A2FG1)

We're VERY open to new practices...we pride ourselves on that, always looking to do the latest and greatest way of working with children...(A2FG2)

I don't think anybody's afraid to bring new ideas forward, as long as you're open to the conversation ...the nice thing is everyone's voice is welcome...It's actually more than welcomed, it's encouraged and expected. (A2FG2)

One supervisor also noted the use of evidenced based research, "there's always new types of interventions that are coming out of research, so we're always looking to that as a vision" (A2FG2). Best practice approaches were also being supported in several communities of practice (informal consult, April 10, 2014). This openness to best practices aligned with the treatment philosophy of providing "high quality services that are informed by research" (agency values card), and was formalized in a research and evaluation policy (Admin P&P, 9-10). It reflected the agency commitment to stay abreast of current and emerging ideas regarding clinical practice, research, staff wellness and engagement (informal consult March 19, 2014). This focus on innovative treatment approaches, client centered and evidenced based approaches was confirmed in the Accreditation Report (2011).

Directors and supervisors promoted learning through staff professional development opportunities and community training:

We have a substantial professional development budget, it's encouraged, it's supported, and to a certain degree it's expected...They've basically said 'anything you can find, as long as you can validate it's worthwhile'...We do a lot of training ourselves, we'll organize huge workshops and events sometimes with other agencies. (A2FG2)

Supervisors added that they support staff learning, encourage reflection and open discussion (A2SQ). This investment in professional development fit with the agency value of “being the best” (agency values card) and agency policies and procedures (Admin P&P 3-70). They attributed their continued desire to work there to the agency’s investment in learning:

Some of the senior managers, if they know a strength of yours, they’ll find you to help them do something in that area, which I REALLY have appreciated. (A2FG1)

That (learning) culture has always been here...it creates an environment that you really want to work in because it gives you opportunities that you probably won’t get elsewhere. (A2FG2)

7.5 Staff Recognition and Wellness

Meaningful, positive and genuine recognition of staff’s contributions was supported by directors and supervisors:

Recognizing people's strengths even when you have to really dig around for one. We all need some recognition, that you’re on the right track, or you did a good job. (A2D1)

Recognition is really important...someone really showing that they understand what you went through to get that job done, that there was maybe an extra effort. (A2D4)

Genuine is key...I really try and make sure that I’m forwarding an email or something they can read on their own...It depends on the work they’re producing. (A2FG2)

Recognition was embedded into the culture through several unique features. These included: a ‘shooting stars’ program, where staff nominated their colleagues for excellent work; a wellness committee, with healthy activities and wellness surveys; and a measurement of ‘emotional climate’ (noted earlier). As one director described:

You can catch somebody doing something really well...everybody who's nominated gets recognized as a shooting star, then we pull the names out of a hat, and (someone) gets a \$25 Tim card or something...the highlight of wellness week is a wellness fair, we have vendors come in, from massage therapists, podiatrists, to organic food, dietitians...the wellness survey, we've been doing it for 13 or 14 years, share the feedback at all levels of the agency including the board...It's kind of important that we act upon it. (A2D2)

Supervisors agreed the agency appreciates and formally recognizes staff contributions; practicing this on a daily basis was a key way of embedding it into the organizational culture:

This is an agency that really takes time to appreciate and recognize what people contribute...the staff meeting...the Shooting Stars board... newsletters with staff announcements...staff coming in with babies. (A2FG1)

There's the employee recognition night, which is an annual thing... they recognize length of service, special awards or achievements that people had throughout the year. (A2FG2)

Our wellness committee has a role to play...it's (recognition) something you have to think about and say every day. It's like random acts of kindness; they have to be practiced 10,000 times before there's a feeling in the culture. (A2FG1)

Demonstration of staff recognition was observed during the all staff meeting. For example, the executive director positively acknowledged the significant contributions of the directors' team to prepare the lead agency application. Further, both the shooting stars program and staff wellness program were reported to be a success (value team meeting minutes, July 2013, Jan. 2014). This emphasis on positive recognition was reinforced in the agency's values card, "we all like to receive recognition for a job well done." Even with this positive recognition,

some supervisors noted that support staff needed more informal recognition:

Shooting stars are great for some, but not everybody likes (them)...we don't do enough of the real simple stuff...with (support staff)...thank them...That's EXACTLY what I'm talking about and I'm probably just not seeing it on the support side. (A2FG2)

Staff wellness was also a priority in this agency, and genuine caring about staff wellness and acting on staff feedback was central to achieving success, as one director explained:

I hope that front-line staff have the sense that people care about everyone's emotional well-being...It's part of the practice, it's integrated into what we do...our wellness survey, it'll be in the 98th percentile really, really, positive...but it's still that two percent that we're concerned about...we need to be aware of who's not feeling heard. (A2D2)

This focus yielded positive results: the survey results indicated an improvement in staff wellness over the previous amalgamation period (informal consult, March 19, 2014). Staff wellness was integrated into practice during the observed supervisor team meetings, for example, discussing staff safety due to increased client aggressive behaviour. Staff wellness was reinforced in agency values, “look after yourself, look after others and look after this place!” and policies that supported debriefing, staff wellness and self-care to mitigate the effects of vicarious trauma, compassion fatigue and burnout (Agency P&P, 1-06). During the follow-up agency presentation, participants noted the research themes reinforced their recent staff wellness survey (May 2014), about staff wellness, reducing stress for supervisors, and genuine recognition for support staff.

7.6 Communication and Sharing information

Consistent with their learning culture and positive staff recognition, directors encouraged open communication and were quite open to sharing information. This openness promoted trust with supervisors, although some recent issues with staff were noted. Directors and supervisors

were also trained in “Crucial Conversations” (a method to collaboratively discuss issues), which emerged as a foundational communication skill to promote trust and safety:

Great leadership has great humanity in it...we have to be masters at verbal communication and have crucial conversations...based on mutual respect and having a mutual goal...it’s about creating safety, being able to say what you need to say, and work towards a resolution...it’s really important to have that conversation. (A2FG1)

We’ve gone through the crucial conversations training together; we really as executive team have tried to lay a foundation of safety, so that we can have these kinds of discussions...going into this great change with transformation and lead agency...we have to be the best that we can be...able to be honest and genuine with each other. (A2D2)

They made a concerted effort to encourage these conversations with staff:

Every time I have a meeting with my team it’s around, ‘what have been some of your crucial conversations?’ Try to really have people think about this all the time, because if we don’t use it then it gets lost. (A2D3)

It (crucial conversations) fit well with my style, and I do use it. I would like to take more of that and bring it to the team I work with, so they could do that more with each other...when you’re working with a group of people there’s always dynamics. (A2FG2)

There was evidence of this practice during an observed supervisors’ meeting: one supervisor used crucial conversations with challenging staff, and another found it helpful to lay a foundation of safety with staff. By encouraging the use of crucial conversations, supervisors and directors were trying to shift the agency and team culture (meeting minutes, March 2014).

Supervisors highlighted some recent issues with staff, as they required training to practice this skill and concerns around trust and safety had emerged (A2SQ):

My staff aren't trained in crucial conversations...it's something that has to be learned, and it's a culture on the team that you have to continue to evolve, support, coach and mentor around. (A2FG1)

The last couple of years on certain teams, there will be people talking about each other instead of to each other...I've seen it across the agency and across disciplines at different management levels...It needs to be addressed and stamped out when it comes up, but I think it's still a challenge for the agency as a whole, that's about safety. (A2FG1)

I've been working on it with my team...trying to talk about what I've learned from other mentors and other teams and about toxic environments...what are the intentions when you're sharing with other people and not talking (directly)? (A2FG1)

During the observed supervisors' meeting, some supervisors raised the concern that program staff feared being in trouble, were hearing negative statements and were undermining each other. Supervisors addressed this issue openly during a team meeting, in terms of professional conduct and staff did accept responsibility for their behaviour. Supervisors reported that they challenged staff on remaining silent about these issues, in effect having a 'crucial conversation.'

Directors also shared information openly with staff, "a more open customer service approach" encouraging staff to "respond to others' needs in a timely and positive way" (A2D4). One supervisor confirmed that directors openly shared information with them about changes, "this place is PHENOMENAL for letting me know what's going on, what changes are coming down the pike, right down to even money" (A2FG2). This openness to sharing information was observed during the all staff meeting. The executive director openly shared information about the lead agency application process and details, arranged for the document to be accessible by all staff to review, modelled interest in staff feedback and invited questions.

7.7 Responding to Feedback and Mistakes

Related to communication and sharing information is the way that directors and supervisors respond to feedback and mistakes with staff. Directors in this agency embodied humility when describing how they listened to and responded to others' feedback:

Remembering to ask for feedback and not being startled when you get it, not paying lip service to it. If somebody really tries to give you feedback, take it to heart...basically trying to practice what you preach, not being defensive if you can help it. (A2D1)

Supervisors also reported that directors were open to suggestions to improve service delivery and there was a culture of respect, listening, appreciation and inclusiveness (A2SQ). Supervisors viewed feedback as learning and they were developing comfort giving negative feedback. They also noted a focus on the bigger picture, trying to support the organizational culture, and bringing concerns forward (A2SQ).

Directors reported being accepting of mistakes and focusing on learning, unless a performance response was required:

I'm understanding of mistakes. I haven't had any happen here that I've felt it was a result of somebody being thoughtless, careless, everybody makes mistakes, fast-paced, stressful environment; you're bound to make a few mistakes. (A2D4)

I don't know what a mistake is...We talk about 'you make decisions using the best information you have at that time...if you were in the same situation next time, how could you come to a different decision?' It's ALL about the learning. (A2D2)

It's all about context. I expect people to make mistakes. I hope and expect that if people make mistakes and they recognize it, they will be forthcoming about it...there are some situations where you're required to be punitive, and we're in a unionized setting and there

are rules about that, so it's also about playing by the rules. (A2D1)

Directors were focused on understanding others' mistakes, "debrief the reason it occurred... that's very important for us as an agency to discuss, those near misses" (A2D3); detecting broader issues, "try to find out why the mistake happened, in case it's systematic or could have been avoided...say next time, 'well this could be done'" (A2D4); and admitting their own mistakes, "trying to stay conscious of your own biases...acknowledging when you've made a mistake about handling someone else's mistake and being able to apologize" (A2D1). This focus aligned with my meeting with a director. I experienced this person to be very open and humble about their practice, with a strong belief in direct and honest communication and admitting their own mistakes with staff to develop a safe culture. Supervisors held similar views around accepting staff mistakes as part of learning:

I expect mistakes to happen. I'm okay when someone makes a mistake. I will always bring it to them...A lot of times staff feel like 'it's the end of the world.' It's NOT the end of the world...it's not great, but it's okay. (A2FG2)

I'm really pushing that 'mistakes are okay, what did we learn from it' kind of model...I hope over the year that people are willing to make mistakes, and it's funny because less mistakes are being made now. (A2FG2)

By accepting of mistakes and focusing on learning, directors and supervisors modelled the agency value of "It's not about you...develop a culture of 'blame free debriefing'" (agency values card).

7.8 Decision-Making and Problem-Solving Processes

This agency was distinguished by participatory decision-making processes and mutual problem-solving. Their issues centered on clarity around who makes decisions and lack of time to process decisions due to competing priorities. Directors and supervisors described trusting, collaborative and participatory decision-making processes at both management and staff levels:

Leaders have to model good decision-making processes, so hopefully that's what we do... There is a significant amount of trust in (ED) in terms of her decisions. (A2D2)

Decisions are more often than not made by one person but there's just A LOT of input by many others... it's part of the culture change for me... where I was before, I would make the decision. (A2D4)

They (directors) do a lot of stuff through committee... they always reserve the decision is theirs, simply asking this committee because they value their opinion. I haven't seen once where the committee's recommendation is not what we go with. (A2FG2)

Directors and supervisors encouraged mutual problem-solving, viewing it as a learning opportunity for staff:

There are sometimes when I feel that I just need to make a decision and lay down the direction, but that's not often. Most of the time it's, here's the problem, the parameters, how do we want to figure it out, and the group figures it out. (A2D2)

You have to set an example of that (problem solving). We try to create a comfortability that people will bring forth whatever they happen to consider to be an issue. We encourage that very much, again we not only encourage it, we expect it. (A2FG2)

Collaborative problem-solving and decision making were noted during observations. In the leadership team meeting, directors freely provided input and asked clarifying questions, and

one director summarized discussion to establish understanding and agreement. In the supervisor team meetings, directors encouraged the supervisors to problem-solve issues, such as team building and monitoring client referrals. This style was reinforced by the agency philosophy of a distributed power base whereby decisions are best made by those closest to the issue, guided by agency values. Decisions were made by service and supervisor teams where possible; however, strategic, financial, stakeholder and political decisions were reserved for the leadership team. Further, while the goal was consensus, the Executive Director had the final decision and reported these to the Board of Directors on a monthly basis (Admin P&P 1-25). This mixed decision-making process had inherent contradictions, as noted below.

An issue arose around the clarity of who was making decisions, especially given the decision-making process through committees with mixed staff:

Being clear with people on who actually is making the decision....sometimes I'm a little weak on that, I'm wanting more to bring them in and not offend them, to the detriment of being just clear. (A2D4)

I don't want to make decisions...I don't think it's good practice, so I really try to put that out to whoever, wherever it needs to be, for them to come forward with some recommendations, and then we can talk about it some more. (A2D2)

It's not always clear who is making the decision. Is it a consult or is this a consensus decision? When people think it's an opportunity to participate in the decision when it's really just an opportunity to share ideas...We have a number of mixed groups...and it's THAT kind of situation where it needs to be clear, is the senior managers going to make the decision, asking for consult, or is it going to be a consensus decision? (A2FG1)

Another issue that surfaced in this agency was directors' competing priorities and lack of availability, which affected the process of decision-making with supervisors:

We met with the (supervisor) group and said, 'we need you folks to carry the ball, because we have these other balls to carry right now, and they have to be our priority.' ...all the things that are happening in terms of the lead agency, the budgeting. (A2D2)

There's not that ability to bounce ideas off of anymore...and because there's no time to process, it's just a decision made, which I don't believe is the right decision but we need to follow it, it's not a comfortable place to be. (A2FG1)

We do a lot more by email...this is (how) a really important decision (is) being made, but I know everyone is just doing the best they can...when this decision goes through it will come back, and it will be a grievance! (A2FG1)

Supervisors had mixed opinions about this issue; some agreed directors were busy and unavailable, while others felt directors were responsive with productive decision-making and resolution of issues (A2SQ). The lack of time to process decisions generated much discussion, and supervisors reflected on the current pace of change which prevented this:

We've been saying we need to slow down since amalgamation, because decisions without process have ramifications, there's acknowledgment that we need to do that, but because of the pace and how quickly things happen, the time isn't there...We have to force that time to process...do we REALLY believe the crucial conversations training? ...it is MORE efficient to have the conversations and good process than to have the fallout later...then we have to make that time. (A2FG1)

This need for process was reflected by the chair of the value team. This person was very

process oriented, ensured everyone was heard, and provided an open process to join. However, this person acknowledged their advisory role had influence but not authority, creating a separate process from management decision-making (informal consult, April 10, 2014). The need to live agency values and allow time to process decisions highlighted the conflict supervisors experienced, as the directors were not providing sufficient time to process decisions and thus were not living the agency value of having realistic expectations “Get Real!” (agency values card). This lack of process time represented a clash directors faced between their clan culture and the external context focus on efficiency, which they confirmed during their feedback session.

7.9 Change Management Processes

Change management was an area where common themes around challenges emerged in all three agencies, including being responsive to continual change, implementing change, and having a change management framework and training. In this agency, both directors and supervisors acknowledged the reality of continuous change:

Managing change and acknowledging change and not being afraid of change, I mean ultimately change is happening whether we want it or not. (A2D1)

Change is something here that is much more positive...we're constantly evolving new things.... From a leadership standpoint...they're very open to let's look at the way we're doing things, let's implement change if that's going to be a valid change. (A2FG2)

Some embraced change and felt they had a leading role in change management:

I'm a bit of a creature of habit, but at work I LOVE change... here I'm all about doing different things, I'm sure it has to do with what I do and the environment. (A2FG2)

I'm okay with change, because change isn't the problem, really it never is, because it's

not about change, it's the transition, but we don't talk about transitions. (A2D3)

One of the responsibilities of a leader is to come up with ideas that will help an organization to improve. Be more efficient, more effective, so that's the initiating part...then it's important to start to motivate others to buy-in to that idea and to work together to make that change happen. (A2D4)

Others noted challenges with implementation of change, including pressures from the external environment, "we know how to do change management but there's so many external factors we don't always do what we should do" (A2FG1), lack of follow through, team challenges, and lack of training:

We don't always follow up with change, we just make the change, and most people are on board with it, but then YEARS later I see the same practice is still happening...that's about coaching and tracking. (A2FG1)

There's how your team responds to change as well...just trying to balance all of that and everybody's needs...As a supervisor team or team leader that can be tricky, depending on the issue and what's at stake. (A2FG1)

I probably need to really get some coaching on that particular change management area myself and I know the whole senior team, and the middle management team probably could benefit from that. (A2D1)

Directors acknowledged the need to help staff with change and transition during the follow-up agency presentation and stated that the research findings reinforced this issue.

7.10 Performance Management and Discipline

This agency assumed a strength-based approach to performance management and staff

discipline and focused on empowering staff; their challenges related to having an overly permissive culture. One director described how she empowered staff during supervision and performance appraisals, and supervisors highlighted the ongoing nature of staff feedback:

Those (supervision) meetings...I expect people to tell me what they need for the most part...I don't do anybody's performance appraisal, basically they do their own, then we sit down and talk about it. I get them to rate themselves...focus on their goals. (A2D2)

I agree a FORMAL review is annual, but a check-in on that review is important...We call check-ins supervision, and I keep notes on that with the staff on a regular basis...I always try to be open and honest with them throughout the year and then reviews are an easy thing. There should NEVER be something shocking on it. (A2FG2)

The focus on setting goals, professional development, performance evaluation and supervision, was consistent with the agency supervision procedure (Admin P&P, 3-35). By following the principle of ongoing feedback, supervisors were living the agency value of "It's not about you...when we give performance feedback, we will try to make it specific and constructive."

Supervisors also expanded on how they conduct performance appraisals, highlighting co-creation with staff, a strength-based approach, and staff wellness:

We have a discussion with them (staff)...where their growth areas are, what they're doing well...their accomplishments...I've seen more of an interest and an invested buy-in to what are their goals...growth areas, how do we support them to do that. (A2FG1)

What was the most difficult over the past year and what are they most proud of?...I'm just the cheerleader, they know intimately what was the most painful for them...I ask my staff to name a person that they've had the most struggle with...that's brave. (A2FG1)

These practices were noted in the leadership meeting minutes (March, 2014) and informal consultation (March 19, 2014). Consistent with this strength-based approach, directors shared their positive beliefs about staff performance, “not everybody’s a star, but I believe that people want to do a good job...so you can work through the other things” (A2D4); and how to manage this, “it’s all about relationships...I can ask them to do anything, and they would do it. And they can ask me to do anything, and I’d probably do it” (A2D2).

There were mixed responses about how to handle discipline. Some tried to work through it with staff, “if there’s been an incident that has required some form of discipline, typically they do it to themselves, they’ve even written their own letters” (A2D2); “I hate to discipline, that’s got to be a problem employee not doing their job...work through it and get to an improvement” (A2D4). Others recognized discipline as necessary for significant issues, “there are consequences to our actions...it needs to be stated in a diplomatic fashion ...respectful of the person” (A2D3); and “discipline comes out when there is a repeated behaviour or a SIGNIFICANT issue, e.g. somebody crossed a boundary with a child” (A2FG2).

Although not widespread, some directors and supervisors perceived an agency culture of permissiveness around discipline, “there’s been a lot of permissiveness...we need to have those conversations...we’re avoiding to have (them)” (A2D3). Following up with staff performance issues was an issue due to their collaborative culture and lack of director support:

Part of not saying no or setting firm boundaries, is there are staff working in the agency ... (who) haven’t been held to account...It can lead people to believe that they’re just allowed to perform this way...they continue to have performance issues and nothing is being done. (A2FG1)

There needs to be the crucial conversations, these are the expectations...Our senior management has to support us to do that...it harkens back to being a family...but at the other end of the scale there is a job that needs to be done. (A2FG1)

This agency culture of permissiveness created tension for supervisors who felt unsupported, and there was wide agreement on this. Supervisors were also concerned about long-time relationships between directors and staff and the risks involved in addressing staff performance:

There are a lot of relationships, sometimes between front-line right up to the top, I trust that people are exercising their boundaries, but I do feel a bit in a fishbowl...So knowing the line of the support you are going to get (from directors)...it feels like such a RISK ...Unless I know that everybody else is doing it this way and I have that SUPPORT...is it REALLY going to be of benefit? Or am I going to pay and everyone else pay? (A2FG1)

This need for consistency was also noted during the observed leadership team meeting. Directors discussed human resource issues, and one emphasized the importance of being consistent with staff and following agency policy around grievances with the union.

7.11 Leadership Development

Congruent with agency values, directors and supervisors in this agency had consistently invested in leadership development with positive results. One director highlighted the value of such investment as part of staff mentorship; another expressed a desire for further learning:

We think about leadership development...if you have a value of trying to invest in your people, trying to help them be the best that they can be, then leadership development is embedded in that...Followership is equally as important as leadership...bringing people along, mentoring people is important here, and it's becoming REALLY important as people are looking at retirement, this is endemic across our field right now. (A2D1)

It would be good to do more leadership development at a senior executive level and on a group basis to strengthen us individually and as the executive team... We are trying to have retreats... talk about the big picture more than our regular weekly agenda. (A2D4)

Similarly, supervisors positively endorsed the agency for promoting leadership and providing mentoring and training at all staff levels:

We do a really good job of mentoring leadership... we have a lot of leaders here in the agency in our staff... people are recognized for what they bring as individuals, rather than looking at people through the hierarchy. (A2FG1)

Some people do some really neat things here and show their skills... that is really cultivated here, and some people go for training to learn how to do those things. I really appreciate that. (A2FG1)

I'm definitely seeing that they are investing in management, they're investing in that training, and I've NEVER seen that kind of thing before... so I think they're pretty committed to it here. (A2FG2)

Supervisors highlighted the positive outcomes for themselves and others as a result of the agency's support around leadership development; the agency's culture of respect, listening, appreciation, inclusiveness, and open sharing of information was also noted (A2SQ):

(Agency) is the place that has always allowed me and everyone to do that learning and the opportunity for that growth, and supported me through the growing pains. (A2FG1)

When I leave here, I'll be a better manager than when I started... Part of it is the training that they offer, but... it's going to be more from the culture within. (A2FG2)

7.12 Leadership Satisfaction

Overall, directors were satisfied with their leadership practice, although they noted room for continuous improvement:

There's always room for improvement...I'd like to put my ideas across more elegantly perhaps, and more strongly and clearly....I'm still a little uncertain of myself. I'd like to bring more energy into introducing changes and continuous improvement. (A2D4)

Some supervisors also indicated that they were mostly satisfied with their leadership practice (A2SQ), while others described their leadership as a journey, emphasizing continuous and peer learning:

I've been a supervisor for (many) years, and I've done a lot of growing over those years...I believe I'm an effective supervisor, I didn't always have that confidence...I think over the years I LEARNED what I believe a good supervisor is. (A2FG2)

I'm pretty comfortable with my style right now, and it's been challenged...actually I want people to challenge me because that's going to help me grow. But I also feel very confident in defending the way I approach things. (A2FG2)

I would like to get to a point where I'm comfortable with the confrontation side as well as the open side...it's ALWAYS in my head when I'm meeting with people. (A2FG2)

In contrast with above, some directors were dissatisfied or struggling with their leadership practice:

I only have so much time...So I'm trying always to find balance...I would like to do something more intensive, over a few days or week. (A2D3)

This is my mantra these days, 'try not to fret over what I have no control over.' Because I can spin out on things and I can get...a little crispy around the edges, or I get more

visibly anxious. (A2D1)

Several supervisors also expressed dissatisfaction with their leadership practice. They discussed the negative impact of various issues: excessive work demands, raised leadership expectations, and lack of directors' support for overload and work-life balance. This was a strong theme and there was group consensus on this issue:

I've always had a big belief in balance of life, but it's been really a challenge. I don't think I've done that well...you still don't feel like you're getting accomplished what you should...I have never been prepared for this to consume my LIFE, this is my job, so the more that's asked of me, it's finding that balance and it becomes a disconnect. (A2FG1)

When I first started...it was supported to go home, just leave it (work) to the next day... (Now) it's like 'this needs to be done now, how come it's not done?'...A couple of years ago, 'You need to find that balance, if you can't do something, you need to say NO!' Last year, 'Yes, consider this an invitation to say YES a lot more!' So when do I get to say NO? What is that saturation point, and who gets to make that decision? (A2FG1)

The excessive work demands and expectations on supervisors and lack of support for work-life balance contradicted the agency policy and strategies for staff wellness, such as maintaining work-life balance, boundary setting regarding work time, accessing workplace supports and generating work satisfaction (Agency P&P 1-06).

Supervisors also expressed concerns about the impact of modelling this excessive work practice on staff. They were trying to uphold the value of staff wellness, yet were aware they were not modelling this:

Balance of life is really important and the example we set, and I have a staff say, 'oh I'm so glad to see you're going home early, cause that makes me feel good that I can do that.'

Well I don't want to give that message, I believe they should be flexing their time going home early, but they see you doing it. (A2FG1)

One thing I am constantly preaching to my staff is self-care (everyone laughs), well and when I answer an email at 9 o'clock at night, this is me finding my balance... We're looking at emails and we're conversing with staff when we're home. (A2FG1)

The issue of self-care was also evidenced in a supervisor team meeting. Supervisors admitted that while they preached self-care, both they and staff did not practice it by taking vacation due to excessive work demands. One supervisor had a goal of their staff "not to be burned out like last year" by ensuring they took vacation on a quarterly basis. They admitted that staff were fatigued and had "weathered a tough year" (A2FG1).

7.13 Summary

In summary, the directors and supervisors in this agency demonstrated numerous strengths with their leadership practice and organizational culture. They had developed a meaningful and shared mission, vision and values with staff that were embedded in practice. They had shifted to a flatter structure, with a matrix model of leadership that centered on a network of relationships. They had rebuilt a strength-based, family centered, cohesive clan culture, established a collaborative union relationship and a measure of emotional climate. They encouraged a continuous learning culture and investment in staff professional development, and had created meaningful staff recognition and wellness initiatives embedded into their culture. They shared information and communicated openly with staff, using 'crucial conversations' to lay a foundation of safety. They also invited feedback, accepted mistakes as learning, and humbly admitted their own mistakes. They engaged in participatory decision-making and mutual problem-solving processes, were responsive to and embraced change, and followed a strength-

based approach to performance management. They had consistently invested in leadership development with positive results, and expressed some leadership satisfaction in their role.

However, there were also some issues with the organizational culture and negative influences from the external context, both of which impacted their leadership practice. Culture issues included a lack of recognition for support staff, lack of clarity around who made decisions, lack of change management training, and a permissive approach to staff discipline. Negative influences from the external context centered on increased demands for risk management, quality assurance and data management. These external demands resulted in downloading of directors' responsibilities to supervisors and lack of support, which impacted supervisors' wellness and work-life balance. The lack of director availability also resulted in a lack of time to process decisions with supervisors and follow-through on changes made due to competing priorities. The question that arises from these findings is: to what extent can social work leaders preserve a collaborative learning culture and participatory decision-making within an external context driven by demands for performance measures and outcomes? This question will be further explored in the last chapter (10), Discussion and Conclusion.

Chapter 8: Agency #3 (Children's Mental Health, 12-18 years)

Organizational Culture and Interaction with Leadership Practice

In agency #3, the various elements of organizational culture were marked by a mix of strengths and weaknesses. Strengths included well developed mission vision and values, a new meeting structure, strength-based learning culture, openness to feedback and change, acceptance of mistakes, clear performance management guidelines, and an innovative leadership program. There were also several challenges with its organizational culture, around living values, meeting process, stalled learning culture and leadership development and lack of staff recognition. The agency had a hierarchy (top-down) culture and this interacted with a directive leadership approach, with inconsistencies around sharing information, decision-making, planning change and performance management. The external context was also constraining the agency's organizational culture and desired leadership practices. The various elements of organizational culture and their interaction with leadership practice will be discussed further below.

8.1 Mission Vision Values

The mission, vision and values were well documented in this agency. The mission statement was "creating opportunities for positive change with individuals, families, communities" and the vision was to become a "strength-based, appreciative, learning organization" (agency website). The agency had also developed core values: responsiveness (listening to clients' and staffs' needs in decision-making); excellence (continuous learning, innovation, risk-taking, teamwork, quality improvement); accountability (performance outcomes, recognizing achievement); stewardship (effective and efficient use of resources); and trustworthiness (trust-based relationships to achieve positive outcomes). These values were embedded in some agency documents guiding practice and discussed during the observation of

management meetings (April 1, 2014). While there was previous evidence that the core principles and values had been translated into action (Accreditation Report, 2009), there were challenges living some values in practice, as noted later on. This agency was also committed to inclusive client service delivery and had a written workplace diversity strategy, which included being fair, inclusive, respectful, responsive and culturally competent. These practices included participatory decision-making with staff, clients and partners to improve organizational performance and innovation, management actively encouraging staff ideas, leading by example, and learning from mistakes. There were challenges with this as well.

Directors admitted that progress was stalled on the mission, vision and values; they had limited meaning and supervisors noted a lack of focus on the strategic plan:

It (amalgamation) sucked up every ounce of senior management input we had. Well, for any of these initiatives, unless you have those champions and drivers...it (leadership) always has to be at the senior level or you never pull off that vision. (A3D1)

The senior managers work the hardest to try to make connections back to it purposely for people, so they detect the value in it... in my experience, I don't think the vision and mission really drive the work. (A3D3)

When was the last time that the management team met and talked about what our strategic plan is? It's everything according to the flavour of the month; I'm never quite sure what we're supposed to be focusing on. (A3FG1)

During the follow-up agency presentation, directors explained that some improvements had been made. They had successfully completed accreditation (met 100% standards) and developed new strategic directions.

8.2 Organizational Structure

While the organizational structure and management remained the same, a new meeting structure had been adopted. This included a full management meeting (directors and supervisors) in the morning, followed by a supervisor meeting on advancing program initiatives, and a senior management meeting in the afternoon. The full management meetings included one hour of facilitated discussion on a key aspect of the organization, with appreciative, strength based observations to promote a learning culture. The supervisors took turns conducting these learning sessions but interest and value in these was waning, resulting in more team facilitated discussion (informal consult, April 1, 2014). During the observation of a full management meeting (April 1, 2014), directors followed a traditional structure, setting the agenda and facilitating discussion with the supervisor group. The meeting did start with appreciative moments, for example thanking supervisors for their extra work, responsiveness, flexibility and team work.

Some directors commented on process issues in senior management meetings, “there's a lot of discussion, a lot of collaboration...a lot of process, and I don't know if it's always guided process as it could be” (A3D2). These issues included a lack of preparatory thought:

We don't demonstrate our best leadership in terms of managing how prepared we are going in for meetings; doing our thinking before we get there...we need to operate as a business...I don't value the unending discourse about things. A3D4

These concerns were also noted during the observation (April 1, 2014) of the senior management meeting, as some discussions appeared prolonged and could have been summarized more quickly, which would allow more time for strategic discussion. Also one director was very quiet and did not participate much during the meeting, which they later explained:

Even being on the senior management team I do have reservations to some extent,

because so many things they discuss are not related to my job...I just sit there and listen because I don't have a lot of input, I'm not near the units. A3D5

Still, one director highlighted the positive aspects of the agency structure: "how we organize teams...a shared vision around more of a continuum...positive change" (A3D2).

There had also been some restructuring of supervisor responsibilities and supervisors were feeling burdened as a result:

With fiscal changes, within the past few years we've had one position eliminated and the responsibilities from that job have been fanned out...Every time we're a person down, that's more calls on your free time...then you get tired and frustrated...you're supposed to be supervising and leading your team...it's too much!' (A3FG1)

Supervisors appeared unhappy about these added responsibilities and it was affecting their work satisfaction. They highlighted their frustration with having to do more with less (A3SQ).

8.3 Organizational Culture

There were some historical issues with the union that impacted organizational culture. One director noted that fairness was a central issue; while they were encouraging staff to move beyond this issue, they acknowledged it impacted management decisions:

FAIRNESS is a big play amongst front-line staff and amongst middle managers; it hardly ever is an issue with senior managers...There's some (negative) history...the union dynamic at the agency, there's always been a dark side of that...there have been times when I've struggled because the broad management team remembers the negative part of that (union dynamic) and wants to make decisions based on the worst of people. (A3D3)

Some directors admitted the unionized environment negatively impacted organizational culture and their leadership practice, around resolving conflicts, relationships, and motivation:

We have a conflict resolution procedure with our employees, right up to and including arbitration, at times it feels like you're locked into just a process. I'd like to work to resolve things... but I am bound by precedent, I am bound by the structures. (A3D2)

I'm having to be careful of my role in these kinds of meetings...it feels contrived...It puts my natural way of working with people aside sometimes and that's been a challenge for me. (A3D3)

I'm not a union person, but I've seen how it was before the union and I see how it is with the union...people, from what I remember, were more motivated when we weren't unionized. (A3D5)

Despite the negative influence of the union, the agency had experienced a decrease in union grievances (informal consult, April 1, 2014). This was attributed to supervisors' management of the collective agreement under the guidance of program directors, and was reflected in the lower number of disciplinary actions and formal conflict resolutions that were mostly resolved (Human Resources Report, 2012-2013). The directors encouraged an internal conflict resolution process with staff prior to initiating a grievance or arbitration. The agency also had a labour management committee with representation from staff and directors. However, the agency was anticipating an increase in grievances with the upcoming renegotiation of the union contract (informal consult, April 1, 2014). During the follow up agency presentation, directors indicated that they were in continuing negotiations regarding the collective union agreement.

8.4 Learning Culture

Directors reported that they were using appreciative inquiry to promote a strength-based learning culture, aligning with their vision (initial meeting, Nov. 27, 2013). They recognized that

a learning culture “requires sustained, focused effort that is tracked and evaluated” (minutes, 2013-2014). There was some evidence of this effort, as the vision was integrated into the guiding principles of front-line job descriptions and senior managers discussed agency learning through a program management day (minutes, 2013-2014). However, while the directors were invested in learning, they admitted that progress had stagnated, and they were feeling the need to reinvest in this. Some directors queried whether an innovative culture could thrive in a more directive environment (initial meeting, Nov. 27, 2013). This concern was further upheld during senior management discussions, in terms of the challenges of promoting this strength-based learning culture given increased ministry pressures and reduced resources (minutes, 2013-2014).

This agency had invested significantly in learning through a “knowledge network” and a “best practice committee,” where they would report back on evidence-based practice in residential care. One director described how they promoted the learning culture through evidence and staff training:

Our focus is on the evidence that supports practice...We’re strategic about our learning externally and how it comes into the organization and we actually have a committee called the ‘knowledge network’ who...vets the external training that people go to and manages how that training comes back to the organization. (A3D2)

The best practice committee included the “*Best Residential Experience or BRE*,” a best practice manual developed with supervisors, along with a schedule to move this initiative forward (Strategic/Operational plan, 2014/2015). As one director explained, this initiative was supported provincially by the Ontario Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health:

(Centre) were very supportive...so we got really motivated, we worked through the foundations model committee to begin to set out steps to actualize what we had come up

with in our position paper on what the BRE should look like. (A3D3)

Staff development was promoted in various ways, through supervision, team meetings, planning days, training and education (informal consult, April 1, 2014; Employee Development P&P 2.7). Agency support for staff development was stated in the annual Human Resources Report (2012-2013), which listed several staff training opportunities. Staff were also expected to be goal-focused and responsible for their own training needs. Further efforts to promote this learning culture included improvements in quality assurance performance indicators, student placements, evidence based practices and research projects (Strategic/Operational Plan, 2014/2015). There was also evidence of continuous quality improvement (CQI) activities, as directors discussed confidentiality breaches and the process for reviewing outcomes (minutes, 2013-2014). One director described these efforts:

I try and bring in the external into the organization...where we're doing well and areas we could improve...An overall roll-up of our outcome measurement in comparison to the region and the province...one research project was a five year project that was looking at the installation of evidence informed practice within organizations. (A3D2)

As well, directors and supervisors were individually invested in staff learning, "I feel so strongly about the need to be a continuous lifelong learner...never being satisfied with the status quo" (A3D1); and staff development "if we can continually bring in new information and ideas, help people to grow and develop in their professional capacity and for the benefit of the organization" (A3D2). This included risk taking, "I try to model for the staff...that I have an interest in doing things differently, better, taking a few risks" (A3D3), encouraging staff innovation and accepting mistakes, all of which supported the agency value of excellence:

If you have an idea run with it, if it doesn't work or we make a mistake, we will deal with it...that's part of the learning opportunities too...it has fostered creativity, they have better ideas than I could even imagine because they're talking about the work. (A3FG1)

8.5 Staff Recognition and Wellness

Related to learning culture is how well the directors and supervisors supported staff recognition and wellness. This agency had previously supported formal events, such as annual staff recognition and service awards; however, directors disagreed about their value and consequently they were on hold. One director acknowledged this was problematic:

Recognition is a bit of a challenge for us...we all have some different views on that. Culturally our lack of doing that in a meaningful sustained way has hurt us...So those things are harmful for our culture. (A3D4)

Some directors and supervisors saw the value of informal staff recognition, "supervisors will do little things for different staff at certain points for exceptional work or going above and beyond the call of duty" (A3D4), noting the benefit for staff well-being:

The best recognition in MY life came from my coworkers, my colleagues and my supervisor....So I try to live that with the people I work with, I'm very free with my praise for people...when there's excellent work going on...I'm all over that. (A3D3)

Other directors admitted they struggled to provide staff recognition and positive feedback:

It's never been that important to me and I've fallen down over again in accepting and recognizing that people are different from me and need external reinforcement. (A3D1)

Challenges included making recognition meaningful for staff:

Everybody needs different kinds of recognition...They want to know that you're being authentic or legitimate when you're giving the recognition...that you REALLY

appreciate or were REALLY in admiration of something that they had done. (A3FG1)

This was especially in a unionized setting, “the whole question in a unionized environment around common or differential recognition and how you deal with that” (A3D2).

There were some efforts to pay attention to staff wellness. For example, there was concern about the impact of work stress on staff health and wellness, as sick time, workplace injuries and turnover were increasing (Human Resources Report, 2012-2013). Staff medical and disability issues were discussed during the senior management meeting (April 1, 2014).

8.6 Communication and Sharing Information

Directors communicated with staff via email and staff meetings (minutes, 2013-2014). However, they exerted more control over what information was shared and issues arose around sending accurate information, which led to trust with staff (e.g. explaining a balanced budget to staff when the residential beds were empty; informal consult, April 1, 2014). There were also situations where the directors used their discretion in sharing information (e.g. not sharing the lead agency application process with supervisors and staff). This practice conflicted with their agency value of trustworthiness. One director explained this information was considered sensitive and confidential, due to the highly competitive process with insufficient resources. The director acknowledged this decision went against their usual practice of being inclusive with staff regarding decisions (informal consult, April 24, 2014). This closed process contrasted with the later observation of the full management meeting, where the director openly shared details with supervisors about lead agency requirements and submission, although it was unclear when this information would be shared with staff.

Supervisors confirmed a lack of information sharing around the lead agency application, “we weren’t told about it (lead agency) until it was done, we had no details...we asked what it

meant but we weren't given any answers" (A3FG1). This presented challenges supporting the initiative, "it's hard to get behind something, if I don't know what we are waving our flag about"; responding to community partners, "when people (in community) go 'you're going to try for the lead organization?' I say 'apparently.' How does that look?"; and knowing why they were excluded, "there's a process to how they'll make the decision about who is going to be the lead agency, wouldn't you want your leaders shining and taking that to the stage?" (A3FG1).

In contrast with the above accounts, some directors mentioned more open exchange of information with staff in their leadership practice, to improve decision-making:

I'm pretty free with what I share with people, as long as there's not a confidentiality issue or ethical or even a timing issue...I usually try to be as truthful as I can, if I say 'I know things but I can't share them with you yet,' I just tell them that. (A3D3)

I try to promote that multiple sources of information makes me better as a leader, and when I have to make decisions, the better information I have from multiple sources, hopefully the better decisions I can make. (A3D2)

8.7 Responding to Feedback and Mistakes

Related to communication and sharing information is the way that directors and supervisors respond to feedback and mistakes with staff. Directors in this agency stressed being open and receptive to feedback, even when it's challenging:

People want to see responsiveness. If you believe in the whole concept of learning, you better respond to feedback and be open to it. It's not easy, don't get me wrong, I can struggle with it just like anybody else with critical remarks. (A3D1)

You may not like what people have to say, but I'm always open to hearing it and those

kinds of things help you grow...there have been times where I've responded to something that I've not felt good about afterwards. (A3D4)

Several directors reported accepting others' mistakes as learning:

Is it a mistake or is it just learning?...I also say, 'well, we're all imperfect, we all make mistakes...those are our best learning opportunities.'...If it's just an honest mistake, how do you work through it overall? (A3D2)

I have high tolerance for honest errors or mistakes...I'm usually pretty gentle, I won't avoid talking about it, I'll wait to see if it's a theme or not. Some managers or leaders jump too quickly on an error or an oversight. (A3D3)

I feel that (staff) feels they can come in and tell me, I'm not going to go bananas or anything, a lot of times it isn't as bad as you first think. (A3D5)

Directors also admitted their own mistakes, viewing them as opportunities for shared learning with staff:

What I try to do with my mistakes is to bring them forward as public learning, or organizational learning, or senior management team learning. My own mistakes keep me from getting arrogant...I'm continuously reminded of my own failures. (A3D1)

Always stepping up and taking responsibility for them (mistakes), always acknowledging that you don't have all the answers but you'll find them. (A3D4)

I don't like them (mistakes). If I make a mistake the first thing I do is go to the director... I don't like to sit on something like that because it just kind of festers. I want to deal with it and get it resolved. (A3D5)

8.8 Decision-Making and Problem-Solving Processes

There were inconsistencies in leadership practice around decision-making. Directors practiced collaborative decision-making at the senior management level but they used more directive decision-making with supervisors, suggesting a more hierarchical and controlled process. In contrast, some directors and supervisors emphasized participatory decision-making in their desired leadership practices. There were varying opinions on problem-solving methods.

Directors highlighted the complexity of decision-making at the senior management level, although some struggled with the changing nature of these decisions:

We tend to bring in complicated or layers of issues and things to consider in decision-making at the senior management level... But because of our experience, we just bring more depth to the discussion at hand and make better decisions. (A3D3)

I go through a decision-making process...is it right, is it ethical...then that decision is made in a different way and I sometimes struggle with that...in terms of my leadership ...‘that's the end of the road and that's the decision-maker.’ (A3D4)

Directors admitted taking a more directive approach to decision-making with supervisors, although some stressed this was due to exceptional circumstances:

Decision-making at the middle management level is much more difficult...(we) have needed to be more directive in our work recently...because of the inability of the group to reach decisions...they sometimes get buried in details, and miss the big picture. (A3D3)

We had a scenario in one of our sites in the spring of 2012...I said to the whole management team, ‘First and foremost what I see is a reflection of a failure in leadership’...I had to step in, in a very forceful and directive way. (A3D1)

This directive decision-making practice appeared to conflict with the agency value of responsiveness (listening to staff in decision-making) and reinforced a hierarchy culture. One director perceived this practice aligning with situational leadership, explaining that directors were responding to supervisors not being sufficiently self-directed. However, supervisors emphasized they lacked input into management decisions as a regular occurrence:

In management meetings there are decisions that have been already made, and they're put on the table for us to discuss them when there's really no discussion to them...don't let me think I have input into it when I really don't...It's frustrating because we know our jobs and we've been supervisors for a very long time and we have the staff's best interests at heart... 'so why would you think possibly that we're making a bad decision for the organization?' (A3FG1)

In contrast with the above directive decision-making, both directors and supervisors reported more participatory decision-making with staff in their ideal leadership practice:

I think decisions are best informed by as many sources as possible...many people have different vantage points and bring that to bear to inform decision-making. (A3D2)

For me personally, I always try to be mindful of everybody's input, what's the best thing for the organization, how are other people going to perceive this decision. (A3D4)

I always invite and try and encourage people to have input...I want them to try and make the decision...if there was no decision-making in it... I wouldn't want to discuss it with my team to make them think they have a say in it when they really don't. (A3FG1)

Some directors also stressed the need for a problem-solving method, while others highlighted a more organic and creative process:

Having both good technical skills and agreed-upon methods for solving problems are helpful for teams...often people jump to solutions before they truly understand what the problem is...then you can move through to problem resolution. (A3D2)

The problem solving models...to force it through the model the way it's stated becomes an artificial feeling experience. ..There's times where we stumble and fumble our way through...we're okay with that...to get to a solution. (A3D1)

8.9 Change Management Processes

Change management was an area where common themes around challenges emerged in all three agencies, including being responsive to continual change, implementing change and having a change management framework. In this agency, directors acknowledged the reality of continuous change:

For me there's a need to continuously grow and change...the gap between...where the organization is and...could be is to some extent immeasurable. (A3D1)

We used to talk about change as kind of a discrete thing...change is not a discrete event, its life, it's every single day, it's just part of business now. (A3D4)

Some directors and supervisors were open to change and embraced creative ideas:

I'm more open to change now than I ever was...I don't react to change...a manager who is not prepared to change these days is going to be in a tough spot! (A3D3)

Having a continuous learning vantage point myself, it's a natural thing that I'm always looking for areas I could do better, I could do this in a different way. (A3D2)

I have a high value on innovation, and letting staff bring the best of their ideas, because again that's how you get their commitment and the follow through. (A3FG1)

Other directors were concerned about the rapid pace of change and negative impact on staff:

Change is tough, that's not news and nobody really likes it...Certainly resilience for staff, responsiveness, the pace of work and people having time to be able to process it...I do get concerned that the pace of change is SO overwhelming sometimes, we get so tied into what we have to do right now, we don't have time to look at big picture. (A3D4)

Saturation points, that organizations and people are only able to do so much, at a certain pace, and in a way that is going to be healthy and productive...some believe in the burning platform (change required to survive)...that is effective as well, but its toll is different. (A3D2)

One director stressed they had a leading role in managing and anticipating change with staff, while another felt staff resisted change:

I find that I have to play a buffering role with the staff...and also a good planning role, so that change is positive and is achievable in a good way and not just chaos...Anticipating change is also very important, having awareness of not just the internal environment but the external and what we anticipate down the road and sharing that information. (A3D2)

Where they struggle is changing some of their work habits...many of the staff have been here a long, long time...there's guardedness therefore resistance about (change)...I think they struggle sometimes at a PERSONAL level with change. (A3D3)

Some directors and supervisors admitted to a lack of planned change management, follow through and time to implement changes (A3SQ):

Sometimes we'll get going on a project or a direction and there can be an under-estimation of what's required to really integrate it in and to sustain over time. (A3D2)

We have these great ideas about recognizing people or how to influence the culture, but all it ends up being is an hour of talk at some meeting and then we leave...sometimes we're not quick enough really to act on it...we like to process things a lot. (A3FG1)

Supervisors expanded on this theme, revealing they were the “Masters of Nothing,” as new initiatives lacked clarity, leading to staff frustration:

We're the “Masters of Nothing”...front-line feel the same way because they're trying to do whatever comes down the pipeline with no clear direction, or not a lot of support by myself...I can hardly keep up with all these changes, less ensure that my TEAM has a good understanding ...and are able (to do it)...So then we're frustrated at this (supervisor) level, they're (staff) frustrated at their (level)...they're struggling with the same things we are. So unless that changes, I don't see the culture changing. (A3FG1)

Supervisors were concerned about the agency frequently pursuing new initiatives and not achieving a healthy balance, as there were too many projects occurring at once. This concern was viewed as legitimate by one director, who admitted to pushing change and pursuing new opportunities to drive the agency forward (informal consult, April 24, 2014). However, this director felt that follow through was improving, with more thorough and detailed plans, and review of action items at management meetings. An example of trying to balance new initiatives was observed during the senior management meeting, when there were varying opinions expressed about the timing of union negotiations given the upcoming lead agency process. Some directors felt that having these processes coincide would increase supervisors' workload too much, while others felt strongly that union issues needed to be addressed. This disagreement resulted in a deferred decision (observation, April 1, 2014). Other constraining factors to managing change included the rapidly shifting external environment, the lack of financial

resources and staffs' varying capacity to change (informal consult, April 24, 2014). The need for all directors and supervisors to develop change management skills was also recognized as a priority, as evidenced in discussions and the Strategic/Operational Plan (2014/2015).

8.10 Performance Management and Discipline

Along with managing change well, directors and supervisors also need to pay attention to performance management and discipline. This agency had clear guidelines but some challenges following through with staff performance issues. The directors also became more authoritative towards supervisors as an accountability measure, with negative results.

This agency had clear supervision and performance management guidelines. For example, staff were required to “actively engage in the supervision process” and to demonstrate interest in personal and professional growth and goal-setting (Supervision Process, p. 1, P&P 2.7). Directors were observed discussing the supervisory process for staff who were not meeting expectations during the senior management meeting (April 1, 2014). The performance evaluation process was also linked to the agency values, supervision and job descriptions; however, it was a challenge for supervisors to keep these updated annually (informal consult April 1, 2014; P&P, 6.3). Despite these challenges, there was previous evidence of a “strong supervision and support culture” (Accreditation Report, 2009, p. 6).

While there were clear guidelines, there was some concern by directors and supervisors about not following through on staff performance concerns consistently:

Sometimes as leaders of the organization we're not very good at pulling the plug when we need to...we make those decisions for reasons, but there's a significant impact...It lowers the bar instead of raises the bar...how long does it take for everybody to fall to that...we just need to say 'stop that's enough' and take the consequences for that. (A3D4)

We've had conversations regarding disciplinary actions...but then when it gets to a certain level, the disciplinary action...gets pulled back...So we continue to talk about our staff having standards less than what we would hope for ideally...But there's a sense as an agency that we're also gun shy because staff will start the grievance process and we're broke, there's a feeling that we will do things to avoid arbitration. (A3FG1)

There was also a shift towards being more directive with supervisors. One director explained that supervisors were not meeting service development requirements; as a result, this director became more authoritative with supervisors, requiring them to complete a monthly 'report card' with 25 accountability measures. This director appeared nervous discussing this:

We've asked the supervisors to provide us with a monthly report card...there was inconsistent follow through...so it's stressful to us in a way that there are some gaps we needed to address...There was push back...some of the veteran supervisors...felt we didn't trust them...So we had to actually process that...Now it's a non-issue. (A3D3)

These report cards were developed to increase supervisors' follow through of key activities, in response to increasing ministry accountability. Directors met with supervisors every two weeks, with some improvements noted (informal consult, April 24, 2014). Discussion with supervisors about meeting ministry quality assurance measures, performance objectives, and client satisfaction outcomes was also observed during the full management meeting (April 1, 2014). Notably, directors explained that they were trying to shift the agency culture from blame to trust and accountability (initial meeting, Nov. 27, 2013); however, report cards appeared to be having the opposite effect, which conflicted with the agency value of trustworthiness.

Supervisors presented a very different perspective of report cards. They viewed these as micromanagement, resulting in increased workload:

We talk about letting our staff take risks...but I don't think we're feeling that we can.

Something has changed and it's become much more micromanaged in probably the past year... We have a report card we have to hand in monthly to make sure we are doing all our duties... Its micromanaging and it's an additional administrative task, it takes a lot of time... I feel like it's been people's identified supervision concerns and they've just rolled it up into this nice report card and said it's because of accreditation. (A3FG1)

While accountability was increasing, directors explained they used discipline infrequently, "I rarely go to discipline...it's not the most effective way I've felt that people change their behavior" (A3D3), and "it's not something I fall to quickly" (A3D4). However, there were situations where it was required "it's just a non-negotiable thing" (A3D4), and "there's a line when a person's behaviour is just not to be tolerated and in fact can poison the environment" (A3D3). At these times, directors followed a progressive discipline approach.

8.11 Leadership Development

This agency was aware of the need for leadership development and had pioneered a unique internal program called 'Leadership Constructed.' This program was led by one director and three supervisors and co-created with staff, based on an appreciative inquiry process that began in 2007-2008 (informal consult, April 1, 2014; agency document, April 2012). The purpose was to nurture leadership at all organizational levels, and there was a focus on staff engagement. The underlying assumptions were forward thinking: everyone can be a leader, leadership skills can be learned as an experiential process, leadership is shared as a collective process, and innovation and experimentation with new approaches and diverse ideas is required to meet future complexity. Core skills required were: self-awareness (emotional intelligence), presentation skills (being strength based), knowledge (mentoring and building skills), influencing others

(engaging and supporting others) and personal integrity (honesty and ethics). This training took the form of workshops (lunch and learns) six times per year on various leadership development and training topics. Interested staff participated for a period of three years (2009-2012) before involvement declined. This initiative, like others, was then pushed aside during the merger attempts with other agencies, although there was interest expressed in resuming these sessions. Self and key informant evaluation measures were proposed but it was unclear whether these were completed. Despite these challenges, this leadership development program was considered “thoughtful and inclusive” (Accreditation Report, 2009, p. 6).

There were mixed reviews about this leadership program. Some directors reflected that staff enjoyed the training, had buy-in and everyone’s contributions were valued (informal consult, April 1, 2014). However, other directors felt this process had limited value:

It seemed to be a waste of everybody’s time. I’m not saying the concept wasn’t valuable ...but people were groping for something to do...they’re trying to get supervisors into the mode of training and motivating staff...I didn’t think it worked very well. (A3D5)

I don't think it was to the quality level that we should be training people at. It’s very engaging of people...but the product, we could bring our managers to a whole different place if we brought someone in or sent people out to a set training. (A3D2)

Some directors gave the agency an overall poor rating for leadership development; although they supported it, they admitted it had been neglected due to competing priorities:

You can believe a lot of things, but to implement them in a complex operation like this, that’s underfunded, overstretched...is a very difficult thing to pull off. Leadership development, as much as I believe in it, is constantly pushed aside by other imperatives that come our way that we have to respond to. (A3D1)

With everything going on, the mergers and those aspects, we stalled around it, attention was elsewhere. I think we're at a point of saying, 'we need to get back to this, we can't just put this stuff on the backburner, we can't just shelve it.' (A3D2)

The reality that leadership development was delayed because of the amalgamation attempts and lead agency transformation was also acknowledged by directors during the initial consults (Nov. 20, 2014). As well, the need for supervisory leadership development and having monthly meetings with staff was discussed at senior management meetings (minutes, 2013-2014).

Supervisors echoed these concerns, and felt the agency had retreated backwards in its commitment to leadership development. This compromised their practice and they felt like "Masters of Nothing:"

We've gone backwards, we've lost ground...It started with amalgamation, we thought our agency was advanced with leadership development...we used to offer training to others...there was a time when we all did leadership coaching, that was an exciting time to be part of something because you were doing focused developmental work. (A3FG1)

There's been things that we WANT to do as an agency...but nothing has been followed through on...You're a 'master of nothing.' You limp along the best you can at everything, but you never leave going 'GOT IT!' And that's VERY frustrating, it's not how I want to work, it's not the leadership I want to provide. (A3FG1)

Supervisors rated leadership development as very poor, with no change or action, and needing much work to progress (A3SQ). This issue of supervisor dissatisfaction and need for further leadership development was discussed during the follow-up agency presentation, and participants agreed that leadership development needed to be resumed as an agency priority. Directors also explained that there were major staffing changes at the supervisory level, which

may have impacted their work satisfaction and affected the findings. Despite these issues, one director strove to empower others as leaders, involving them in community forums:

Our program directors are involved...in forums in which there are other (directors)...I try to model that kind of empowerment that the functions you have, the tasks you have and the roles you play are a function of your competencies and not tied to position. I hope that moves down through the organization...we've had supervisors be part of forums. (A3D1)

8.12 Leadership Satisfaction

Overall, directors were satisfied with their leadership practice, although they noted room for continuous improvement. Some supervisors were also satisfied, while others were dissatisfied and discussed the negative impact of various issues.

Several directors indicated that they were fairly satisfied with their daily leadership practice, while others focused on ways to improve this:

I'm reasonably satisfied, I feel good about my work every day...I feel that I've earned the respect of those that I work with and those that report to me. (A3D3)

I've been at it a long time and I feel I know a lot, I'm comfortable...At the same time I also feel I'm just at the beginning of developing leadership skills. (A3D1)

I also believe that there's always more you can do in better ways, and that goes for leadership practice as well...especially with urgency, time pressures...I can move in decision-making really quickly...so I always have to watch the process aspect. (A3D2)

Some supervisors were mostly satisfied with their leadership practice (A3SQ), while others were dissatisfied due to a lack of training and leadership opportunities:

I always think there are things to learn, but from where I sit, I'm satisfied with the

direction I'm going in...I've had less than one year experience in this position so I have A LOT to learn, but others are guiding me in the right direction. (A3FG1)

I feel like I'm stagnating if I'm being honest...this might be the best I'm going to get...We don't get as much training as we would like, we're administrators rather than leaders...Maybe if I was allowed more opportunity to LEAD or TEACH my employees, I'd feel better, that maybe I could use skills that I haven't been using. (A3FG1)

Supervisors were clear that leadership training was not happening, due to competing priorities and task-focused meetings. There was no time for supervisor development and they reiterated their theme of feeling like a 'Master of Nothing':

We meet every two weeks and we're supposed to have dedicated time to do that (supervisor training), when is the last time we did it because something always takes priority...if we have one (meeting) it's to clear off the 'things to do' agenda! So it's not about development of us or visioning...My supervisions with (director) are about business, here's the list, where are we, what's next, but that's not what I need. (A3FG1)

Supervisors also revealed they had lost peer support with each other; they were limited in their own knowledge and wanted leadership training from new sources:

We've lost that connection with each other...we don't have that as much as we used to... We've all learned from the same people, so when there's a new manager at the table, it's like 'woo hoo!' because THEY bring out things...it's very limited in terms of what is brought to the table, and that's just by virtue that we all moved up the chains of command after lengthy histories here...what I want to be clear about, it's not just development from people that I already work with, EXTERNAL, NEW ideas. (A3FG1)

8.13 Summary

In summary, there were both strengths and weaknesses with the organizational culture and leadership practices in this agency. The mission, vision and values were well articulated and new strategic directions had recently been developed, but there were challenges living them in practice. The directors had adopted a new meeting structure but they had issues with their management process. Supervisors had additional responsibilities imposed as a result of restructuring, reflecting external fiscal constraints. There were aspects of a hierarchy culture, with formal union rules and procedures that constrained directors' influence. On a positive note, the agency had a clear vision to become a strength-based learning organization. They developed innovative programs and promoted staff ideas; however, despite this investment progress stalled with external demands. Formal agency staff recognition was limited and not embedded into the culture, although some directors practiced this informally.

Communication and information sharing varied between open and closed processes, depending on the situation. For example, directors did not share information with supervisors around the lead agency application, which resulted in supervisors feeling excluded. On a positive note, directors claimed to be open to feedback and accepting of mistakes, admitting their own to staff. There were inconsistencies between directors' desired (participatory) and actual (directive) decision-making practices, suggesting a more hierarchical and controlled process, similar to their culture. Some directors and supervisors were open to change, while others noted challenges with continuous change and lack of planned change management. This resulted in negative consequences and frustration for supervisors and staff. Performance management guidelines were clear but not followed through on with staff and directors became more authoritative with supervisors, instituting report cards as an accountability measure. While directors viewed this as

a necessary response to the external context, it eroded trust with supervisors and conflicted with agency values.

Directors had pioneered an innovative leadership development program; however, further progress was stalled due to competing priorities and pressures from the external environment. Supervisors echoed these concerns, noting the agency had retreated backwards on their commitment to leadership development and training. While directors were mostly satisfied with their leadership practice, supervisors were mostly dissatisfied and felt they were stagnating. They emphasized the need for further leadership development from external sources. A question that arises from these findings is, how do leaders maintain their commitment to innovation, a learning culture and leadership development, and resist the need to become more directive and hierarchical, given the pressures in the external context? This question will be further explored in the last chapter (10), Discussion and Conclusion.

Chapter 9: Agency #1 (Child Welfare, 0-16 years)

Organizational Culture and Interaction with Leadership Practice

Agency #1 had some strengths, including a well-documented mission vision and values, positive senior management restructuring, promotion of a learning culture, openness to feedback and change, and collaborative problem-solving. However, it experienced the most challenges with its organizational culture and interaction with leadership practices. Prominent challenges included a hierarchical culture, negative past legacy, limited formal staff recognition and information sharing, a negative reaction to mistakes, directive decision-making and lack of involvement. These multiple challenges resulted in trust and safety issues for supervisors and lack of satisfaction in their leadership practice. Other challenges included a lack of planned change management, inconsistent performance evaluation, and limited leadership development. It should be noted that directors felt the agency culture and leadership practices have since improved. The various elements of organizational culture and the interaction with leadership practice will be discussed further below.

9.1 Mission Vision Values

The agency's mission, vision and values were well documented. The agency's mission statement was "working together with children, youth, their families and the community for the safety and well-being of children and youth" and the vision was "a supportive community where children and youth are safe, secure and nurtured in permanent loving families" (strategic plan, 2012-2017; 2013 general agency brochure). Agency values emphasized the safety and security of children and youth, family diversity, positive inclusive space, strength-based approach to professional practice, open and transparent organization, innovation and creativity, social justice and advocacy, and positive community change. The agency had also developed strategic

directions and objectives, focusing on prevention and early help, leadership for change, and service excellence through organizational effectiveness (strategic plan, 2012-2017).

There were mixed perceptions about the agency's mission, vision and values. Some directors upheld them, while some supervisors saw them as unclear and not integrated:

As an organization we're pretty good at understanding what our vision is, what our mission is, what our values are...we really haven't drifted far from those important values and I'm really happy about that. (A1D2)

So the mission is really the touchstone...but it still doesn't make sense...all these different kinds of categories...I don't know if it's embedded in the culture... they get presented at All Staff (meetings)...but I don't think it's really linked for people. (A1FG1)

These contrasting views extended to strategic planning as well, and there were some challenges living these values and strategic directions in practice, as noted later on:

You have to be aware of and participate in the development of a strategic vision for the organization...making sure that what we are doing is in keeping with that strategic plan, being a good steward of the resources that we have. (A1D3)

Even with setting our senior management plan for the year, I was really struggling with it...I'm not sure I see the full circle...I strongly feel that the management team should be able to articulate how that (plan) feeds to the strategic plan. (A1D5)

9.2 Organizational Structure

The senior leadership team had been recently restructured with fewer positions and layers, and managers advanced to new director positions (informal consult, March 21, 2014). This structure included weekly senior management meetings and monthly 'all management'

meetings with directors and supervisors (meeting minutes, May 2013). These restructuring efforts supported the strategic objective to “align strategy and organizational structure to meet goals and objectives” (Strategic Plan, 2012-2017). Directors were observed in this new structure during a senior management meeting (April 16, 2014). While the executive director chaired the meeting, other directors were asked for input and shared ideas. They joked with one another, seemed comfortable and engaged in informal discussion. They also spoke up, expressed their opinions, supported and challenged one another. Although requested, there was no opportunity provided to observe directors interacting with supervisors during an all management meeting. Senior management set the agenda for these meetings and they reportedly welcomed input from supervisors (meeting minutes, 2012-2013). Several directors reported positive outcomes with the recent management restructuring:

Without that extra layer of leadership in there, it's really pushed us to develop those collaborative working relationships differently, so this new structure is really promoting that... There's a really good energy amongst us and I really VALUE that. (A1D4)

So with those positions leaving... the four of us really have to work together to make the organization run... it feels really good... We had some courageous conversations with each other and they've gone really well, and there's an openness to doing that. (A1D3)

While some supervisors highlighted positives with the new agency structure, others pointed out the continued existence of agency hierarchy and directives:

We hear from workers who are trying to get here (agency)... that there is a different culture. Now maybe that's just our size... perhaps we realize then how lucky we are, and the management structure we've got... that makes life very easy as well. (A1FG1)

There's hierarchy here...whether we want to pretend that exists or not...It's inherent in our structure, there's people above people, and those people make decisions, and they can boss you around...and you can be 'voluntold' to do things. (A1FG1)

I don't think we even challenge them (directors) a lot really. We've had...a lot of meetings where they've just come and said 'here's what we're doing and why and you're going to suck it up' and we go 'oh okay' out the door and do exactly that. (A1FG1)

Several supervisors elaborated on their concerns with the new management structure:

But they (directors) just dumped it (new responsibilities) all down on us...When they reorganized, they were going to follow up with a review...There was no formal feedback mechanism created to say, 'Does it work not having a director level? How is it going from eight to five? What's the impact?' (A1FG2)

Supervisors noted that they were feeling negative with the management changes and upheaval, as there was tension and instability, a 'deficit culture' and doing more with reduced management (A1SQ). These concerns appeared to contradict the agency strategic direction to "align strategy and organizational structure to meet goals and objectives" (Strategic Plan, 2012-2017).

9.3 Organizational Culture

The organizational culture in this agency was quite pronounced, with a negative past legacy resulting in departmental divisions and trust and safety issues for supervisors. The loss of a previous supportive director, and the current directors' reactive and questioning style, was a key issue for supervisors. Some directors were making efforts to shift this culture.

One director described the dysfunction of the previous senior management team and their negative influence on organizational culture:

There was a huge dysfunction across the services and corporate services area...there was

a TON of fighting across departments at the senior level. It was BAD and (previous ED) never dealt with it...at one point (directors) hunkered down (to each department). (A1D3)

Given this negative past legacy, some directors flagged a trust and safety issue with the supervisor group:

Our supervisor group is a little bit concerned about safety in their group and with us...we (directors) try and hold people accountable for good results but we're pretty open, flexible, supportive...a lot of it is the legacy that's been left by those before us that we're now having to clean up. (A1D3)

It's become very clear to me that that trust isn't there...they're (supervisors) not able to challenge each other. When I have meetings, nobody seems able to articulate what it is they think needs to happen...they're afraid that their peer will judge them that they're going to do it wrong. (A1D2)

Some directors questioned supervisors feeling unsafe, as they tried to be open:

(Director) and I struggle when people say they don't feel safe...we both sort of react in the way of, 'really, what's that about?' because we're both really open to people coming in and speaking their mind to us and there are lots of people that do it. (A1D3)

We don't get to that synergy or that connectedness where we're all on the same page...even though I feel like I'm being as open as possible, putting it out there, inviting lots of leadership to come back, it's just not happening. (A1D2)

Directors described the supervisors as stuck, with relationship issues, departmental divisions, and trust issues, which was hampering their leadership ability:

With our supervisory group we're kind of stuck...they're all supervising their teams individually, there's relationship issues amongst them...We've really worked hard at

trying to dismantle the children's services/family services thing (departmental divisions)
...it's WAY better...but there's still room for improvement. (A1D3)

The supervisor group (said) we need trust and safety...others are like, no we need leadership. ..We definitely need the leadership stuff...like you've got to be CLEAR on what it is you're trying to achieve...then maybe the next step is...building safety in order for you to actually do that. (A1D2)

Another director also acknowledged that the supervisor group is struggling, "(director) is gone ...unsettled by the changes, some are tired, some are at the max of their capacity in terms of growth and development"; however, they provided an alternate viewpoint of being realistic and clarifying priorities:

What do they (directors) want them (supervisors) to focus on...holding their staff accountable ...making sure that the standards are met...championing new initiatives?

How do they build balance in for people so that everybody feels valued? (A1D4)

Consistent with this alternate viewpoint, supervisors explained the recent senior management changes were affecting their daily practice, with a shift toward negative questioning. They gave examples of not being able to talk freely and not feeling safe, trying to address this issue and experiencing negative consequences as a result (details omitted by request):

The senior management has undergone a significant change...so we're trying to give them the benefit of the doubt...but when it does impact your day to day functioning and our negativity...it's going to get passed down to front-line staff. (A1FG2)

She (previous director) would say often, 'I tell people at my regional groups that I have the best supervisors and I think that's one of the most important things in our agency.'

I've never heard anything to that effect since then. If anything, it's like 'what are you guys not doing, maybe we need to fire some people!'(A1FG2)

Several supervisors also stated having less influence on organizational culture, feeling less valued and trusted with input and involvement in project development (A1SQ).

Supervisors also missed the previous director's positive influence, "the biggest loss I feel from her leaving is the buffer role she played. There was much less reactivity...she was very, very reflective." (A1FG2). They recalled her positive legacy; she was described as responsive, supportive, encouraging and calm:

She was always very supportive...and that felt really good as a supervisor...(she) was just the model...unconditional (support)...You could actually be challenged too, and then you could reflect on it and say 'yeah, maybe I could have done that differently'...She had a way where you just wanted to do right by her, you didn't feel in trouble, you actually wanted to correct whatever the issue was...You could go to that person and say 'I just did this, not sure if it was the right thing, I screwed up'...always calm, when I think about how much that meant for me, that's exactly how we need to be leaders. (A1FG2)

Supervisors listed these as core leadership characteristics (calm, trusting, collaborative, high expectations, belief in positive intentions, responsive and available, A1SQ).

Supervisors contrasted this experience with their current directors, who were described as not available and not transparent with communication, leading to a negative culture shift and fear of raising issues (A1SQ). This culture shift did not support the agency value of an "open and transparent organization" (agency brochure). The current directors were experienced as more reactive and inconsistent "what we have now is REACTION, then back peddling, 'Oh, I never said that' and then 'No, you're wrong'" (A1FG2). One supervisor wondered about lack of time

“there is so much on their plates, they are trying to problem solve quickly” (A1FG2). These themes of directors being stretched thin, giving reactive responses and supervisors feeling unsupported, were also noted in some supervisor questionnaires (A1SQ). This negative tone appeared to contradict the agency value of “professional practice that begins with a strength-based approach” (Strategic Plan, 2012-2017).

Supervisors also recounted tremendous agency change and staff losses; they were fearful about being held accountable for risk issues and this affected their trust:

There’s been an awful lot of change within this agency in the past year...we haven’t taken stock of the fact that we lost 16 people... we kind of underestimated the impact of what that was going to be and it’s still taking time to heal from that. (A1FG1)

A year from now, there’s going to be something that we weren’t doing during this period of time...and it’s going to be (directors), ‘well how come nobody’s doing this anymore?’ That’s my sense of what will happen...They’re (directors) involved in all their stuff, so I suppose they just trust us, until they can’t trust us! (A1FG1)

I don’t think senior management actually appreciates what it’s like on the ground...they only know if there’s a mistake...we’re running really thin...we’ve almost had a whole team missing...we’re lucky a baby hasn’t died really...it would be our fault. (A1FG1)

Some supervisors attributed the changes to risk management in the child welfare field, while others upheld a negative shift in agency culture:

It’s (child welfare) a culture in which there’s always the financial issue that permeates everything we do... there are lots of risks and consequences...a certain urgency to everything.... you do have a role to play to kind of manage that, help people regain perspective try not to become overwhelmed. (A1FG2)

That has been child welfare FOREVER, the financial uncertainty, the risk that we take with clients, that doesn't address the difference in culture, the difference in feeling that we have as supervisors about the consequences of taking initiative, speaking out...within this organization, the culture has shifted HERE, so that now people are feeling less supported, more vulnerable, less heard, more at risk. (A1FG2)

Despite the above challenges, there were some recent attempts to shift the agency culture towards a business approach and more professionalism, although some disliked rules:

We run a business and you need to get your head around that. So we're going to create a culture that has excellence in business practice...we have innovation in IT...in HR...in finance...in service...I don't think that was the culture before I was here. (A1D1)

So we've moved away from that (culture of family) and my leadership contributions sort of support that, so it's comfortable, it's small, it's informal, it's genuine, but it's also professional, there are some clear boundaries. (A1D4)

Some people like rules...as leaders it's really important that we not get bogged down with (rules)...we have to be constantly checking ourselves and asking if they make sense, if they meet the needs of the clients we are serving. (A1D3)

9.4 Learning Culture

This agency was invested in several innovative service projects. These projects included 'Signs of Safety,' a strength-based, solution-focused approach to safety and risk assessment with children and families; Family Conferencing, to create long-term safety plans and earlier permanence for children and youth; Family Finding and Heart Gallery, which locates permanent homes for children using extended family members and social media; and Early Help services, to

strengthen communities in partnership with other agencies (Annual Reports, 2011-2013). These initiatives reflected the agency value of “innovation and creativity” (Strategic Plan, 2012-2017). During the senior management meeting, directors discussed creating a vision and implementation plan for Signs of Safety, promoting a learning culture, raising expectations for supervisors to implement this model and act as champions and providing training for staff (observation, April 16, 2014). There was great energy and passion about moving this forward, which was balanced with discussion about integrating new initiatives and creating a collective organizational vision.

Some directors had a vision of a learning culture and recognized the importance of continual organizational learning:

This is what a learning culture is, feedback, reflection, change...knowledge acquisition ...constantly learning, reflecting on what you're learning...both by being open to feedback and by measuring what we're doing in a concrete way for our systems. (A1D2)

Our whole survival is based on our ability to learn from what we're doing now and make changes...part of the trap that people fall into is they think they've arrived (A1D1).

Some directors emphasized their efforts to build a learning culture, through discussion groups, reading and training:

I'm excited right now to promote a learning culture because I think there's interesting articles...it's not heavy and overwhelming...we've had 15-20 people to each one (discussion group). So learning culture is you have to keep trying new things. (A1D2)

(Through) conversations, giving people articles, talking about things out there, bringing new information to people...when I have people who are doing a lot of that...I really try and support it, because if you squelch that it's hard...to continue to (learn). (A1D3)

Supervisors also strove to promote a learning culture with staff through: research, “I send out tons of research articles...I give them things about learning, or we challenge people about ways of thinking” (A1FG1); webinars, “people making use of webinars, because it’s so easy to do” (A1FG1); focusing on results, “I’m being a lot more outcome focused...workers are finding that quite challenging to their practice” (A1FG2); and using Signs of Safety “some become overwhelmed with the complexity of the problem...So the SOS stuff helps with that” (A1FG2). Promoting a learning culture within their own teams, and supporting workers’ skill development and solution-focused work, were also mentioned (A1SQ).

While directors agreed that the agency supported new projects, they acknowledged that more progress was needed to embed a learning culture in practice:

We’re trying to talk about a learning culture and I think we have a long way to go in understanding ourselves what it means, living it and helping staff understand what it means and really behaving like an organization that is a true learning culture. (A1D3)

There’s lots of support for that (learning culture) but I wouldn’t say lots of modeling, and it’s frustrating because I think some people think it’s this outside thing...we all have to do it!...have to read, we all have to prepare, not everybody’s doing that. (A1D2)

One of the things we haven't done is a really comprehensive needs analysis around what our staff need, where is the gap...Let's be clear about that, and then we can build the LEARNING, because learning is different from training. (A1D4)

Some directors felt the issue was staff not taking risks and making time for these new initiatives:

We’re trying to implement SOS and it’s a little bit risky to put yourself out there to try new approaches...But we want people to do that...It’s not the time, it's about identifying what's important and then prioritizing it. That's a real issue in our culture. (A1D3)

Just jump right in and try!...I'm willing to alter course, I don't care if we make mistakes, let's try it! If we make mistakes that's good, we'll learn something out of it. (A1D2)

However, supervisors emphasized lack of time for learning and safety for taking risks:

To build capacity for a learning culture...you have to have the time sanctioned to absorb that information, and that's a big challenge. Because I find that a lot of the expectation for learning is done off-time. (A1FG2)

If you're feeling fearful, it's hard to engage in some of those aspects of a learning culture, being able to reflect on the mistakes that you've made, or to learn from past things ...worried if you ask the wrong question, you'll be looked at differently. (A1FG2)

There is a push for a learning culture in the agency but people are not practicing what they're preaching...We hear people say those words, but people don't do it. (A1FG1)

Directors also acknowledged it was hard to move Signs of Safety forward given workers' high caseloads and the current fiscal climate (meeting minutes, 2012).

9.5 Staff Recognition and Wellness

Related to learning culture is how well the directors and supervisors promoted staff recognition and wellness. Formal staff recognition was limited in this agency. Some events were supported at the Annual General Meeting (AGM), such as staff years of service awards, volunteer recognition, and service partners' award of merit (meeting minutes, 2012). Directors and supervisors emphasized the need to embed recognition into the organizational culture:

I don't know that we do a good job recognizing people for good work. We...send an email out and publicly acknowledge somebody for having done some good work or talk

to them individually...I'm sure there are other things that we could do...publicly at staff meetings...doing write ups and annual reports or newsletters. (A1D3)

We should embed that (recognition) as part of being a leader, but that's really hard to do sometimes, so we don't do it consistently or as an agency. Different people will do it different ways, sometimes it's verbal, sometimes it's through email. (A1FG1)

Several directors and supervisors recognized the value of staff recognition, in terms of staff well-being and organizational functioning, and practiced recognition on an informal level:

It's really important, and you have to give recognition for what people do...it helps to get staff buy-in, people feel more ownership for the process and the services that we provide ...it's important for well-being and worker satisfaction...if you don't point out the positives, you could have high burnout rates. (A1FG2)

You're not going to ever have continued buy-in from your staff and your team or your agency if you're not showing that you value their contribution. (A1D5)

When I see things or when something comes to my attention, I ALWAYS make a point, I'll send an email...It's those moments of good work it's important to notice. (A1D3)

I did an email to the team...but it got to the point where for a couple of people I couldn't think of anything...We just have to work it in and have our minds attuned to the positive ...I don't think people want a big deal, because they don't think it's genuine. (A1FG2)

Other directors admitted they struggled to provide staff recognition and positive feedback, and some suggested the need for continuous improvement:

I don't need recognition in order to feel good about my work, so I have a hard time, I have to fake it a bit on that one but I do recognize it's important for most people. (A1D2)

I'm really bad at giving positive feedback and really good at giving constructive feedback...I don't want to be disingenuous...it's that balance of telling them they are doing a good job without overdoing it. (A1D5)

Being a little humble and not thinking that what we're doing is absolutely the best thing, although it's good to celebrate successes we should never rests on our laurels and always be examining what we're doing and trying to improve upon it. (A1D3)

We're a community agency and we're accountable to our clients and we can do better, we need to be proud of what we do, but we need to challenge ourselves to do things better...I don't want us to be patting ourselves on the back all the time. (A1D1)

One director supported the need to be mindful of how to meaningfully recognize people's contributions, in their feedback of themes. Some challenges to making recognition meaningful for staff were the unionized setting and excessive work demands:

Our funder would like us to give people incentives...she's always suggesting that we give people incentives for good work...there's a real concern about how that plays into union issues. (A1D3)

We spend a lot of time focusing on case related things...we don't always dwell as much as we should on what's working well...we have good intentions...it comes down to the volume that we're dealing with...There's pressure all the time. (A1FG1)

There were some efforts to pay attention to staff wellness through a staff wellness program and a slight decrease in sick time was noted; the most recent focus was on stress

management during budget cuts (meeting minutes, 2012-2013). Directors were observed discussing staff wellness ideas, such as a health fair and fitness, during the senior management meeting (observation, April 16, 2014).

9.6 Communication and Sharing Information

There was a formal tone to sharing information; all staff meetings were used to update staff on agency business. For example, during budget cuts, directors discussed a detailed communication plan to announce staffing layoffs through an all staff meeting and a written memo (meeting minutes, fall 2013). One director stated:

I try to deliver news in person. So we tried something new this time...I was set up in the big room here but it was webcast to the other 2 offices...if I delivered bad news by email people would complain about that. (A1D1)

This director brought in an external consultant to inform big decisions:

When we did senior management restructuring, I brought in a consultant...I could not have done that individually with people...they just couldn't risk telling me what they really think directly, so indirectly they were able to tell me. (A1D1)

During the observation of the senior management meeting (April 16, 2014), this director was challenged about needing to share information more openly about a community agency initiative. This was noted in one director's feedback of themes, in terms of the need to emphasize strong communication. This shift would support the agency value of an "open and transparent organization" (agency brochure).

9.7 Responding to Feedback and Mistakes

Related to communication and sharing information is the way that directors and supervisors respond to feedback and mistakes with staff. Directors stated they were open to

feedback and accepting of mistakes; however, this contrasted with supervisors' reports of a negative response from directors to mistakes. Some directors readily accepted feedback:

I respond very well to feedback, even feedback that I don't necessarily agree with. I try and model, so I actually crave critical feedback more than positive feedback because I want to know what's getting in the way of me doing my job better. (A1D2)

(Director) and I have a relationship where she gives me feedback, I give her feedback, we both invite that from each other...there was certainly a climate of that being a really good thing, that's been helpful. (A1D3)

However, the issue of trust resurfaced in this agency as an obstacle to supervisors giving and receiving feedback. One director discussed how they were trying to build trust with staff:

Trying to just get people to, when something comes up, it's okay like we can talk about things that we're not doing right. I think that would build TRUST, if we did that...I don't feel confident that they trust me, that what I'm saying is actually good feedback...they don't want negative feedback, they want positive feedback. (A1D2)

Directors spoke of accepting mistakes and learning from them, while acknowledging that serious mistakes may require a performance response:

I really believe that we are going to make mistakes, we're going to make fewer and fewer every day, but our goal is to fix and learn from our mistakes, I really believe that. I don't want people to think that we are perfect because we are definitely not. (A1D1)

I say that ALL the time... 'making mistakes is not a problem...but not learning from them is a problem'...there are very few mistakes that are made that are going to be devastating...What I want to do is promote the learning. (A1D2)

Some of them (mistakes) may need a performance response but it's how you do it that's really, really important because we're really trying to set a tone here for this being a learning organization...you give people an opportunity to demonstrate that they've learned from their mistakes and that they do things differently. (A1D3)

Some directors admitted their mistakes with staff as part of a safe learning culture:

I will stand up and I will try things and I very consciously talk about mistakes I've made and the learning that I've done from those mistakes...to model to other people that I want them to also do it. (A1D2)

Model it's okay to take responsibility, it's okay to admit you're wrong, that you made a mistake, if we can all do that, maybe we can get through some, because you know sometimes people retreat to their corner when there is an issue. (A1D3)

However, in stark contrast to the above statements, supervisors presented a very different view, citing a negative reaction by senior management to mistakes and a lack of time for reflection and learning:

But that's kind of the leadership sense for me here, I get intervened from above when what you said hits the fan...things are fine until I did something that's not okay and then I hear about it...Sometimes it feels negative...all of a sudden, a year later, somebody rolls up some stat and says 'none of your people are doing this.' (A1FG1)

We should expect this (things getting missed) to happen, it shouldn't be a bad thing, but sometimes it feels like we've screwed up...there is so much to remember, and so many things required of us to do, and senior management has become stretched thinner, and so there tends to be reactions to things. (A1FG1)

We're SO busy, things sometimes just steamroll along without proper thought and process involved... We do have a lot of autonomy and that has its positives... but then the problem is because we're given so much autonomy, senior management only know mistakes. (A1FG1)

Supervisors went on to describe a punitive response to mistakes and a lack of sharing information for learning purposes:

There's this punitive element that sometimes slips in that maybe you did do something wrong, so that makes it hard... or you are absolutely made to believe and feel that you did something, that you are guilty until proven innocent. (A1FG2)

Critical incident responses... those are incredibly secret! So we never know how many of them there are... who's involved in them... the outcome... what the issue was... the resolution, and we never have an opportunity as a group to learn from it. (A1FG2)

You are on a performance management issue with someone... and all of a sudden you're hearing from union members 'watch your back because people aren't happy with how you're managing them' cause they talk about these things, we don't. (A1FG2)

There appeared to be a trickling down process occurring; the nature of the relationship between directors and supervisors may have shaped the relationship between supervisors and staff. For example, in terms of their own practice, one supervisor stated "I generally think that my staff have capacity" while acknowledging the need to address performance issues, "then something happens... and you hold them accountable and they still don't change their behaviour that gets into another challenge" (A1FG1). The differences between directors and supervisors' perception of a safe learning culture and acceptance of mistakes highlighted inconsistencies in practice of the agency value "an open and transparent organization" (Strategic Plan, 2012-2017).

9.8 Decision-Making and Problem-Solving Processes

Directors claimed collaborative decision-making at the senior management level and in their usual leadership practice; however they admitted being more directive with supervisors, suggesting a more hierarchical and controlled process. For supervisors, this directive decision-making reflected continuing issues around trust, openness and transparency. Supervisors reported a blend of participatory and directive decision-making with staff.

Directors highlighted the collaborative nature of decision-making at the senior management level and the ability to discuss emerging issues:

I'm very group-minded, I try to make very few decisions...it would be easier if I just told people what to do but I just don't think that's how you build a healthy organization...So the cost is that decisions can be messy for longer than they need to be. (A1D1)

When there are moments of tension, we're all skilled enough to back up and deal with it. Some people need more information to understand where I am coming from...those are usually conversations about resources or practical decisions. (A1D2)

Some directors did note challenges, around the changing nature of senior management decisions, lack of inclusion with others and lack of reflection:

If we need to change direction because we have information that we didn't have, I'm totally okay with that...people might feel like it's wishy-washy. I don't think it's wishy-washy at all, as long as we keep moving forward. (A1D1)

We problem-solve and dialogue around some things quite well...but I still think that we leave one another out of the loop on important issues and we struggle sometimes to make room for everybody at the table. (A1D4)

There isn't the skill (to make decisions). I have felt that we make decisions on the fly, without a lot reflection, without critical dialogue. We don't have a measurement culture that informs our big decisions, although some people might think we do. (A1D2)

Some directors reported elements of participatory decision-making:

I am very careful to try and get as much information as I can to feed into a decision that is needed to be made...then once I have information I think about it. (A1D2)

There is a lot of consultation and collaboration around decision-making that I need to do, especially around training, promoting learning. (A1D4)

They strove to balance their influence, reserving their voice for important decisions:

There is a push-pull to telling people what to do, because in the end I'm ultimately responsible, but I think that's a mistake, and I really strategically resist that. (A1D1)

We're working in an organization where people want me at a meeting...we're working on trying to let the conversation happen and only weigh in when we have to. (A1D3)

Knowing that balance between when to make a tough decision and stand behind it and when to let the grass roots make the decision, and empowering people to make decisions without giving up your leadership. (A1D5)

Some directors did admit to a more directive approach to decision-making and they provided examples of this, although they stressed these directive decisions were in the past or due to exceptional circumstances:

Over the years there had been a lot of...keeping people in a box, 'this is your job, this is what you do...All of our supervisors...have worked under that way of practicing and now we're trying to shift them...from being supervisors to being leaders. (A1D3)

We knew that some of the (staffing) cuts would come from management, to bring the level of discussion and control to a VERY small table and I was very clear with people that news was not to leave that room until I was ready. (A1D1)

However, there appeared to be a gap between directors' accounts of their decision-making and how supervisors experienced them. Supervisors reported hierarchical decision-making, lack of input, openness and transparency, resulting in further trust issues:

Decisions get made at the table but there's not a great mechanism for them to communicate that...like the budget, they (directors) came back and cut everything in half...that created a lot of trust issues, we're not sure they're being honest with us!...That whole budget thing...wasn't transparent...Absolutely, and your staff think somehow that you're influencing that...and I know nothing...Right, 24 hours ahead of you (staff) I may get told, that's the end of it...If they (directors) come to us and ask for our advice, then what we say should have some influence...there have been times in the past where they've asked us and then they haven't taken our advice...the decisions are already made before the input is asked, and it's just a make work thing. (A1FG1)

Several supervisors discussed the impact of these issues, referencing a theme of being in the middle of a sandwich, where supervisors were squeezed between directors and staff:

Well it puts us in a very double bind type situation, because we're like the peanut butter and the jelly sandwich, and the jelly is oozing out. The bread on the bottom is the workers and then you've got the top-down and you've got us squished in between. Because it's sticky and it's gooey and it's yucky!...It does (affect work), when workers come in and say 'what's going on'...we have to go back and fix them up...you figure out a way to manage your team from the fallout of that...So we're filling in the gap...again

we're the sandwich... We're the peanut butter and jelly. (A1FG1)

Some supervisors noted they still try to support organizational decisions even if there is 'bad news top down' but this was a challenge when they were given direction to do things or tried to help staff make sense of senior management decisions when they were not involved (A1SQ).

Supervisors emphasized that directors need to be clear about seeking input when making decisions, and they recalled the clarity provided by a previous director, contrasting it with their present experience:

(Director) said 'I'm going to tell you right now, there's going to be 3 different kinds of decisions that are going to be made, one where I or management will make the decision, one where we will consult with you and make the decision, and a third where we make the decision together'...I can live with that, that was very clear to me...was transparent about what those circumstances were...I feel now that's a bit tokenistic, as evidenced by when we had our family services department together, to have input into the service management plan, and a bunch of titles were written up and you got to put a dot on which one you liked best. That was not participatory and it's barely even input. (A1FG2)

Supervisors noted the 'power and control' of the senior management team and decisions being overruled (A1SQ). This highlighted inconsistencies in directors' leadership practices, conflicting with the agency value of "an open and transparent organization" (Strategic Plan, 2012-2017).

In their own practice, supervisors described a blend of participatory and directive decision-making with staff:

I include the team members in the decision-making process...Listening to what your teammates have to say, using their expertise in your decision-making...I try to get solutions to problems from the team and whenever possible implement them. (A1FG2)

It's a time thing sometimes...you have to make those decisions in a different way and then they can get on with their job once you've made that decision. (A1FG1)

Directors and supervisors emphasized collaborative and team-based problem-solving:

As an organization we're good at problem-solving... there's been a demonstration of openness to creativity and doing things differently and addressing problems. (A1D3)

I try as best I can in engaging in a solution, I try to present my own ideas as possible solutions, not the final solution, although there are times when I say 'this is the way I want you to handle this.' (A1D1)

We're problem-solvers...people come to us when there's a complicated situation and they need help figuring it out...we get pulled into making those decisions...it's knowing when not to problem-solve...we assume that a bit too quickly...because we're rushed for time...and it's expedient, but it's probably not the best process always. (A1FG2)

An example of problem-solving was directors' discussion of ongoing issues in family services, with high caseloads and staff shortages, resulting in high staff stress and poor morale. Service teams were restructured as a result (meeting minutes, 2013). One director perceived that supervisors and staff were not problem-solving, and they wondered if senior management's response shut people down:

Problem-solving, it always involves the senior people...what is getting in the way of front-line staff and the supervisory level...I wonder if our reaction inhibits them...it gets back to us being really attentive to how we invite that input and react to it. (A1D3)

9.9 Change Management Processes

Common themes around change management emerged in all three agencies, including being responsive to continual change, implementing change and having a change management

framework. Some directors and supervisors recognized the value in being responsive to and embracing change, while cautioning a balanced approach:

People in leadership positions sometimes get really comfortable where they're at and openness to change is difficult and especially in today's world, you really have to be open to examining what you do and wanting to change it. (A1D3)

I'm a firm believer that there are lots of interesting opportunities within this organization, and I've always encouraged staff to really consider and try out something new. And I've learned from experience it was great! (A1FG1)

We embrace change here, but not chaos, too much change; it's trying to find that balance between enough, or too much or not enough. (A1D1)

Others were concerned about constant change, the need to be purposeful, and help others cope with change:

We've never not had change though, every year...there's only a certain amount of time that can be spent into people kind of complaining about what's happened, because it then becomes our job to help the teams manage the change. (A1FG1)

It depends on the change. I'm willing to try things out, but I'm not willing to change just for the sake of change. To me it has to make sense, it has to have a purpose, and if it's not something that's going to add any value...then why make it? (A1D5)

Some leaders I've seen are (living) much more in their ideas and we also have to ground this in relationships. We have real people struggling with real issues every day in their personal life and work life, and I think you can push people too hard. (A1D1)

Some directors and supervisors acknowledged a lack of planned change management and sufficient follow through in implementation:

We just do it (change), and I would say there isn't a whole lot of purposeful change management conversations going on or reflection on how things are going. (A1D2)

Sometimes what we're guilty of is, touch down on an issue and expose people to it a little bit, but not really fully look at that area and really plan an approach. (A1D3)

There's a bit of arrogance about that...we (directors) can just do it!...The agency thought they can implement Signs of Safety in-house...Family Finding, just do it...It doesn't work, we don't baseline anything, we don't take stock of where we're at. (A1FG1)

Supervisors expanded on this, explaining there were unintended consequences, their attempts to provide feedback became personalized, and there was a lack of communication and involvement in decisions regarding changes that impacted them (e.g. switching teams):

I don't think we do it (change) well...there are SO MANY unintended consequences that we just have not sorted out...one of the directors said, 'I thought I would just take the whole agency, throw it up in the air, and see where it landed' I thought 'WOW, this will be the leadership style now?'...Since then, when I attempt to bring forward rapidly unfolding unintended consequences...that becomes me being negative, me not being on board, me not getting it, me being a problem. (A1FG2)

A lot of times we're asked to be patient and trusting, that the process will unfold and we'll be satisfied with it, and then perhaps that feedback or communication doesn't come back, or maybe there isn't closure to something. (A1FG2)

They (directors) told us about reorganization (of teams)...it was a secret, and we weren't even asked before that...switches were blindsided...communication was terrible and the way the whole transition with our teams being split...was terrible... 'We've (directors) decided and this is what is going to happen' so we had to relearn a job. (A1FG1)

Supervisors suggested more support to move forward initiatives (A1SQ). Some directors and supervisors recognized that the agency needed a planned change management framework to implement new service initiatives:

If we want to do it (change) right, we have to step back, be really planful, be really strategic about how we're going to...weave them (service projects) together...so that it's clear to staff what we're doing and why we're doing it, and where they fit, and what the expectations are...Using tools that exist out there to help us frame our approach. (A1D3)

If we had a different kind of change management process...we could at least manage it a little differently...Because they (directors) were talking about change management...in the middle of the change, but I thought (it) happened before the change? (A1FG1)

9.10 Performance Management and Discipline

This agency assumed a 'laissez-faire' approach to performance management, with inconsistent evaluation, follow through, and lack of clear measurement. As well, supervisors revealed a lack of director support and safety to discuss issues. One director admitted that they lagged in completing staff evaluations, which supervisors confirmed, although this director provided feedback informally:

I'm behind on my PA's (performance appraisals)...I do that informally all the time it's okay if my PA's are behind...that's a terrible way to think and I need to get my PA's up to date...I don't wait for the PA process, I'm always giving people feedback. (A1D3)

I'm not sure the last time anyone here had a written performance appraisal? So we have to performance manage, but then we don't get that formally...I haven't had a performance review in many years. (A1FG1)

There were also practice inconsistencies; some directors and supervisors viewed the performance appraisal as a joint effort, while others wrote performance goals for their staff:

My experience has been that a PA is a mutual process...I'm more interested in hearing what they think before I tell them what I think...after that joint process, then I take it away and I write it up based on my recollection of our meeting. (A1D3)

We have a discussion, which I always start with an appreciative inquiry about what's working well, what work are you proud of, then the worker would set the goals. (A1FG1)

I was slightly taken aback because my goals are written for me...If we say that we're working in partnership with families...then presumably there should be a parallel process with our staff! (A1FG1)

Part of the reason for these challenges was that the performance appraisal tool needed updating, along with providing clear expectations:

(Director) is quite well aware that the performance appraisal process needs review and I think it's somewhere on the priority list...but I've been hearing for probably four years that we need to attack the PA process but we haven't got there yet. (A1D3)

Nobody really wants to do the employee evaluation anymore because it makes no sense. It's huge, it's burdensome, it's ridiculous...A brief, smart tool, if there are problems you can elaborate, but I mean it doesn't have to be 4 pages long. (A1FG2)

We have some room to go...to start to deal with things sooner and more consistently across the supervisory group...identifying performance issues early on, giving people really good feedback about their performance, about expectations. (A1D3)

Of note, the directors were working on a new management performance evaluation, integrating OACAS leadership competencies; they planned to pilot this form on themselves before introducing it supervisors (meeting minutes, 2014; informal consult, March 21, 2014). This was confirmed in one director's feedback of themes, in terms of focus on developing best practices around performance review and management.

Some directors exuded confidence with managing serious performance issues:

I've gone through a process of performance management where we've been very, very clear, written things down...this has to be changed by when. That's actually an area of strength for me, performance management on a concrete issue. (A1D2)

I'm also okay with people leaving here...I would say at any given time...I'm talking to someone about whether they fit here, either directly or indirectly... 'I want you to be happy and if you can't be happy here, that's got to be okay, for you and for me.' (A1D1)

However, supervisors painted a different picture, indicating a lack of director support to hold staff accountable for performance issues:

The job is hard if we don't have HR back up... they (directors) want us to performance manage, and then when we do, the support isn't there... When do I get support to make the call?...I've tried to build that case... They're (staff) still here and my leadership is potentially called into question over an ability to manage that person. (A1FG2)

This lack of director support was compounded by a lack of safety to raise these issues, and a lack of learning from each other's experiences through peer supervision:

If you put yourself out there, and then you didn't get the response that you thought you would, are you going to do it again?...No, highly unlikely!...I have to find a way to do it differently...It could be part of peer supervision...there would have to be a level of trust among the supervisors that it's going to be perceived the right way. (A1FG2)

These concerns about the performance management process echoed earlier issues with trust and safety and may contradict the agency value of "professional practice that begins with a strength-based approach" (Strategic Plan, 2012-2017).

9.11 Leadership Development

This agency's past legacy was a lack of leadership development, stemming from an exclusive focus on client service; this resulted in directors feeling unsupported and supervisors lacking leadership opportunities:

This organization has not had a history of investing in leadership training...there wasn't an understanding this is important or worth investing in...this agency's always had a culture all of our money should go to support kids and families. (A1D3)

I don't feel like there is a strong leadership culture here. There's a strong value base in this agency but in terms of leadership, I feel like I've been doing it on my own. (A1D2)

You can't extricate the history from the current status because it is linked...if you were micromanaged and not asked to step up and be a leader...we can't sit back now and blame them (supervisors) for not having a leadership vision when we've never given them an opportunity to have it. (A1D3)

There was wide agreement from directors that the agency was just initiating leadership development and further progress was necessary to embed this learning in practice:

In terms of leadership development we're kind of at the beginning of it... I'm excited right now because I feel like for the first time since I've been here, there's an opportunity for us to have these conversations and move this work forward. (A1D3)

In the community we're good because we put the issues out there, we're leaders in terms of getting the issues right. In terms of our actual work, and how our internal leadership supports or doesn't support that, I would say we've got a ways to go. (A1D2)

We need some improvement...like all of us at the senior management table should be able to define this (leadership)...but we're not there yet. (A1D5)

We're all in really different places and individually we have varying levels of insight about our leadership abilities, and about our leadership styles, and about how our style impacts other people. (A1D4)

One director suggested having focused conversations to develop leadership in a coordinated and comprehensive way, on their feedback of themes. Supervisors concurred that the agency was just starting this process, although there had been previous efforts:

We're on the beginning journey, it's done kind of ad hoc up until now, but there may be some seriousness to focusing on this...they've (directors) got a master plan with respect to this...What they're trying to do is start with a new framework, this is the way it's going to be, and they have to get there somehow. (A1FG1)

They're on a learning journey, but when I think back over the last several years we've gone through fads. We had the servant leadership fad, courageous conversations, then we

had visioning, now learning culture...they're trying to figure it out as well, but it clearly feels like, it's a little bit subject to which way the wind is blowing. (A1FG2)

Several supervisors also noted the agency needed to provide more training and support for learning, clarifying ideas and putting them into practice by 'walking the talk' (A1SQ).

Directors were initiating leadership conversations and training with supervisors; their engagement was recognized as essential to move initiatives ahead:

I've only recently started talking about the term leadership...we're having a guy from (program) come to the supervisors' group for two full days to talk about leadership ...we've NEVER had those kind of conversations here, EVER. (A1D2)

We've had this management training...They (supervisors) have to be coaching each other, their staff...they have to see themselves as active participants in the changing culture...this is a really good time to start investing in some training for them. (A1D3)

Although a sole voice, one director encouraged staff who showed interest in leadership positions:

I've had conversations with staff what their long-term goals are, if they're interested in moving into a leadership position...I try to provide opportunities for those conversations or give feedback to people that I know are interested in supervisory positions. (A1D3)

9.12 Leadership Satisfaction

Overall, directors were satisfied with their leadership practice, although they noted room for improvement:

I'm pretty satisfied actually...I don't do it well everyday, and there's not things that I can't learn, but I'm really comfortable with who I am as a leader. (A1D1)

Fairly satisfied, I think I'm a good leader and I have insight...if I could improve some areas of my leadership, I'd like to be a bit more polished. (A1D4)

Much of the time I am happy with what I do, but there's always room for improvement...I'm fairly consistent. I think people would generally say that they know how I'm going to respond to an issue...but not always. (A1D3)

I feel very satisfied in the role I play, but I know I still have a long way to go...how to have those courageous conversations...how to ask questions, how to minimize my own personal frustration and truly engage others in a way that is more effective. (A1D2)

Some supervisors described their leadership as a journey, emphasizing continuous and peer learning:

For me it's on a journey, I'm learning all the time, whether we have a learning culture or not...it's helpful that we've started discussing it, for me to learn from one another...I think it's good to focus some time on it. (A1FG2)

There's always things for me to work on, I'm not very good at the relationship piece versus the task piece...it's an incredibly hard job...it's far more complicated than you realize. (A1FG1)

Supervisors also noted working on delivering 'bottom lines' for staff poor performance, asking rather than telling, staff engagement and ownership, being strength-based and balancing supervision and accountability (A1SQ).

Other supervisors expressed dissatisfaction with their leadership practice. They noted contradictions in directors' messages about their leadership practice:

I struggle in my leadership, you feel like you've got it... then there's...a culture of feeling BAD about how you're doing and guilt...sometimes you get puffed up and empowered that you have this power that you REALLY DON'T HAVE...There's this pressure to learn more, educate yourself better, keep learning, but still do everything you're doing...As my (staff) complement has increased, and my volume of cases has swollen to the highest...I feel guilty that my non-participation and non-presence is noted, because I'm simply focused on trying to keep kids safe. (A1FG2)

Additional issues that affected supervisors' satisfaction included learning about a new department, workload and time constraints, advocating for staff, and others not buying into organizational strategies (A1SQ). One director also commented on building the leadership capacity of supervisors:

The difference would be helping THEM (supervisors) to be more mindful about different approaches that they can use to manage situations and being more conscious of the fact that they're the leaders of the organization as well, that they have responsibility for the culture and for outcomes and for the day-to-day management and success. (A1D3)

9.13 Summary

In summary, there were some strengths and multiple challenges with the organizational culture of this agency, which interacted with leadership practices, such that there were some inconsistencies noted. While the agency values were clear, there were contrasting views about them and the strategic plan. The senior management restructuring was positive with collaborative relationships, but supervisors reported challenges with continued agency hierarchy and additional responsibilities. There were also significant issues with the agency culture around past legacy, departmental divisions, loss of a previous supportive director and negative culture shift,

resulting in trust and safety issues for supervisors. On a positive note, directors endorsed a learning culture and were involved in several innovative service projects. However, more progress was needed to embed a learning culture in practice, and more safety for staff to take risks with new initiatives. Formal staff recognition was limited and not embedded into the culture. Some directors and supervisors practiced this informally, while others struggled to do so.

There was a formal tone to communication and information sharing with staff, and contrasting views on directors' acceptance of mistakes as learning, with supervisors' perceiving a punitive response, which furthered trust issues. Collaborative problem-solving was a strength but decision-making was inconsistent, with directors reporting collaborative processes and supervisors reporting directive decision-making, lack of input and transparency. While some directors and supervisors embraced change, others were concerned about continuous change, the lack of planning, communication and framework. Performance management was inconsistent, with a lack of director follow through, support and safety to discuss issues. Leadership development was just beginning and further progress was needed to embed this learning in practice. While directors were mostly satisfied with their leadership practice, some supervisors were dissatisfied and felt pressure to improve. The question that arises from these mixed findings is, to what extent can leadership be practiced and developed in an agency plagued with multiple culture issues? This question will be further discussed in the last chapter (10), Discussion and Conclusion.

Chapter 10: Discussion and Conclusion

In this final chapter, there are several noteworthy areas to discuss. Following up the preceding three chapters, the unique features, strengths and challenges that stood out for each agency are highlighted, along with the new learning gained from these. Themes that emerged are compared with the existing literature and previous research on leadership and organizational culture, noting consistencies and contradictions, as such comparisons lead to new insights (McCracken, 1988). The general themes arising from the findings on leadership practice and development and the external context are reflected on and elaborated. Further consideration is given to how leaders can embed their ideals in practice, promote leadership development and navigate external challenges. Questions that arise in each area will be noted, highlighting possible implications, directions and uncertainties. Concluding thoughts are shared and areas for further research are suggested. Themes discussed and questions raised may help to inform future leadership practice and development in human service organizations and will provide a valuable contribution to the social work leadership literature.

Before turning to the discussion, I would like to acknowledge the change in my thinking regarding leadership as a result of undertaking this research. As noted in the introduction, previously I had a preference for participatory leadership approaches, based on my own leadership experiences in the field and my reading about the many benefits of this approach. While I still view this leadership approach as ideal, I now recognize that it may be challenging to implement, given the multiple constraints imposed by the external context that leaders are presently contending with. My perspective has shifted to a broadened scope of leadership practices that might be conducive to leaders successfully navigating these challenges. The complexities, contradictions and paradoxes these leaders face may warrant a new blend of

leadership approaches, skill development, and collective effort to adequately respond to the challenges before them, which I will elaborate on in this chapter.

10.1 Unique Agency Features, Strengths and Challenges

As noted previously in the literature review, effective leadership is considered fundamental to organizational effectiveness and viability (Lewis et al., 2012). A primary question arising from the findings is why the leadership practices, organizational cultures, leadership development and satisfaction varied considerably among the three agencies? The factors that may account for these distinct differences will be discussed by highlighting the unique features, strengths and challenges that stood out for each agency, and the new learning gained from these. The degree of congruency between leadership practice and organizational culture emerged as a key factor in effective organizational functioning. An interesting and unexpected finding was how closely the participants' receptivity to feedback mirrored their agency culture.

Agency #2. Despite some negative historical issues, this agency was predominantly collaborative with a clan culture, emphasizing a family atmosphere and an internal focus on teamwork and consensus (Cameron & Quinn, 2006). Evidence of this agency being collaborative came from its shared mission vision and values, flatter structure and focus on a network of relationships, which are distinguishing features of collaborative organizations (Cameron & Quinn, 2006). Promoting a culture of continuous learning was a definite area of strength for this agency. It was embedded into the organization through communities of practice and investment in professional development, and contributed to staff's work commitment. This type of commitment by senior leadership to learning and innovation is known to improve service delivery and organizational outcomes (Hopkins & Austin, 2004).

Meaningful and positive recognition of staff's contributions was a strong theme for all directors and supervisors, and this practice was embedded into the agency's culture through various initiatives. Formal rituals and celebrations that reflect values are a way of positively influencing organizational culture (Schein, 2010). Directors attributed their success to genuinely caring about staff wellness and acting on their feedback. Consistent with their clan culture and participatory leadership approach, directors and supervisors openly communicated and shared information with staff, for example about the lead agency application process. Both directors and supervisors invited staff feedback, accepted staff mistakes as learning, and admitted their own mistakes, demonstrating humility. Crucial conversations emerged as a foundational communication skill for directors and supervisors to establish a climate of safety. Nurturing a safe learning environment, where mistakes are viewed as learning, are prime ways that leaders can foster a collaborative and innovative culture (Baldwin, 2004; Hopkins & Austin, 2004).

The interaction between leadership practice and organizational culture was mostly congruent in this agency, and this is essential for organizations to function effectively (O'Connor & Netting, 2009). Directors viewed leadership as strength-based and empowering others to develop their leadership ability, which is consistent with a participatory leadership approach (Hardina et al., 2007). The directors endorsed participatory decision-making and problem-solving processes, congruent with their clan culture. Their leadership practice was especially notable for building relationships and trust with staff through genuine interest and caring, consistent with feminist leadership principles (Hardina et al., 2007). The directors recognized that leadership is shared and can be learned and that it is not about position or power, consistent with emerging models of leadership (Lawler, 2007).

Both directors and supervisors acknowledged the reality of continuous change; some

embraced this while others noted challenges with implementation and the need for more training. Directors and supervisors also adopted a strength-based approach to performance evaluation, using discipline as a last resort for significant performance issues. These practices are consistent with collaborative organizations that acknowledge a diversity of perspectives and the context and complexity of situations (O'Connor & Netting, 2009). Investment in leadership development was strongly endorsed in this agency. Directors were proactive in providing leadership training and believed in cultivating and mentoring leaders at all levels, consistent with their collaborative and continuous learning culture. Most directors and supervisors were fairly satisfied in their role. Overall, the directors and supervisors in this agency demonstrated many of the features associated with improved organizational performance, such as a supportive culture, inspirational leadership and trust, leading to staff empowerment and motivation and ultimately improved organizational performance (Petter et al., 2002, in Hardina et al., 2007; see Chapter 2).

My experiences of conducting research in this agency mirrored its culture, as the participants were very welcoming and open during the research project and follow-up presentation. The directors responded positively to the report, expressed appreciation for the volume of work, made only minor edits to quotes, and distributed the report to all participants without hesitation. The follow-up presentation seemed to go well as most participants talked freely and were receptive to the information. They confirmed that the themes resonated for them and there were no surprises. They stated the presentation helped to ground them in their core values, as they were dealing with some recent issues. They also had an opportunity to review the final agency report prior to my presentation, which may have encouraged participation. At their request, an executive summary of the agency report was provided for the board to review.

The main challenge facing this agency was the pressure of the external context, especially ministry requirements such as risk management, quality assurance and data management, which are consistent with the new ministry accountability framework (MCYS, 2012). These pressures clashed with their clan culture and agency values and preoccupied directors, resulting in a downloading of administrative responsibilities to supervisors, and a lack of time to clarify and process decisions due to competing priorities. These pressures reinforce the caution that lead agencies require additional human resources, technology and training in their expanded role (CMHO, 2014). Supervisors felt overwhelmed by excessive work demands, lack of director support, poor work-life balance and modelling of wellness for staff. Director and peer support are important considerations, as continued leadership presence and co-worker support have been linked to social workers' commitment and role clarity (Tafvelin et al., 2014).

In summary, there were a multitude of strengths in the leadership practices and organizational culture of this agency. These findings strengthen and update previous research studies on the benefits of a participatory leadership approach and collaborative culture (see Chapter 2). Specifically, these benefits include: fostering trusting relationships (Kramer, 2011); encouraging a collaborative learning culture (Baldwin, 2004; Hopkins & Austin, 2004); upholding social work values (Bisman, 2004; Fischbach et al., 2007; Healy, 2002; Rank & Hutchison, 2000); involving and empowering workers in decision-making to improve service delivery and organizational outcomes (Cohen & Austin, 1997; Hardina, 2011; Hardina et al., 2007; Hasenfeld, 2010c; Shera & Page, 1995; Turner & Shera, 2005); supporting teams (Hardina et al., 2007; Hopkins & Austin, 2004); improving programs and service delivery (Shera & Page, 1995; Turner & Shera, 2005); and involving staff in program changes (Packard et al., 2008).

Overall, social workers can learn an important truth from this agency case study: when leadership practice and organizational culture are congruent, participatory, collaborative and strength-based, they improve organizational performance. This finding extends previous research, which has shown that high performing organizations are more likely to have congruent cultures (Cameron & Quinn, 2006). This basis provides a solid foundation to weather the storms from the external environment, which allows leaders to focus on meeting these demands. This agency serves as a positive example of what leaders can achieve by fostering a collaborative organizational culture consistent with their participatory leadership practices. However, these practices take time and commitment to develop and they need to be embedded into the organizational culture to be successful.

A key question that arose from these findings was, to what extent can social work leaders preserve a collaborative learning culture and participatory decision-making within the context of new managerialism, driven by demands for performance measures and outcomes? This question was highlighted during the follow-up agency presentation. Directors discussed the clash between market and clan cultures and cautioned about a risk of becoming more market driven, with hierarchical decisions and lack of time for process and collaboration. This shift from a clan to hierarchy culture can bring a fear of losing core values and sense of family to rules and procedures (Cameron & Quinn, 2006). The challenge for directors in this agency was how to preserve their core values with ministry expectations, lead agency and data requirements, which mirrors earlier research findings in the health care system (Mizrahi & Berger, 2005). The directors explained that the Board was also operating with clan values and was challenged with a business focus and data collection. Thus, there appeared to be a fundamental conflict between

preserving agency values and culture, and responding to funders' requirements, which was exerting contradictory pressures.

This case study highlights the current risk to children's mental health agencies, which will become a larger issue as lead agency transformation becomes a reality with agencies across the sector and province. There was a glimmer of resistance from these directors, as they were learning to "push back" with the ministry; this may be one way to negotiate these contradictory pressures, as some authors have recently noted (Aronson & Smith, 2010). How directors successfully cope with these conflicting agendas may be an area for future research. As well, the ministry (MCYS) may be wise to proactively provide the support and training required for lead agencies to successfully manage this transition, as suggested by CMHO (2014). These supports will be particularly integral to fostering the type of organizational culture and leadership congruency observed in this agency across the province with agencies in other regions as they undergo system transformation.

Agency #3. This agency had well developed mission, vision, values and strategic directions, the directors were encouraging innovation and social entrepreneurship activities, they had proactively invested in a leadership development program, they had a clear vision to become a strength-based learning organization, and they developed creative programs and promoted staff ideas. Notably, a supportive learning culture has been linked to improved staff learning, quality of client service and organizational outcomes (Hopkins & Austin, 2004). Directors also strove to be open to feedback and accepting of mistakes, which helps to foster a safe learning culture (Hopkins & Austin, 2004). Directors and supervisors also used a situational leadership approach appropriately at times, varying their leadership style depending on the situation and workers' level of experience (Hersey et al., 2007). For example, directors practiced a collaborative style

amongst themselves based on their advanced knowledge and experience, and supervisors varied the amount of direction they provided depending on workers' needs and experience.

Despite the above strengths, this agency faced multiple challenges including viability, given the external context and funding constraints. Further progress on innovation and learning was also stalled because of competing priorities. Their leadership practices and organizational culture appeared contradictory at times. There were elements of directive decision-making and a hierarchy culture, which has formal rules and procedures and is focused on internal control and stability (Cameron & Quinn, 2006). Directors admitted that they shifted from a participatory to a directive leadership style in response to the external context, which was exerting a negative influence. This shift corresponds to their endorsement of situational leadership, which varies depending on the circumstances (Hersey et al., 2007), and takes into account the reality that leaders need to adapt their leadership style to changing external conditions (Yukl, 2011).

This shift can be explained by a "resource dependence" perspective of organizational behaviour: organizations that depend on external resources are also controlled by that external force (Hasenfeld, 2010c, p. 39). In this situation, the directors shifted their leadership approach to meet ministry requirements as they were dependent on ministry funding and resources. However, this directive leadership style appeared problematic at times, as it did not match the circumstances, which is critical in situational leadership (Hersey et al., 2007). For example, directors admitted becoming more directive with supervisors, using report cards to increase supervisors' level of accountability. Directors perceived that supervisors were not self-directed and justified their approach as warranted; however, supervisors perceived this directive approach negatively, as it did not match their perceived level of experience and ability and was viewed as a source of mistrust and micromanagement.

The directors extended this directive approach into their decision-making processes with supervisors. For example, the directors chose not to share pertinent information with supervisors during the lead agency application process. While the directors defended these actions as exceptional practices, supervisors invariably felt excluded from the process. This closed process may be ineffective, as decentralized decision-making is considered more appropriate in human service organizations (Lewis et al., 2012). Directors had made attempts to reduce this hierarchy, by shifting to a new management meeting structure, and they reported collaborative decision-making and problem-solving as a senior team. However, directors admitted being more controlling with supervisors, who confirmed a lack of genuine input into decisions.

The different decision-making experiences of directors and supervisors may reflect their subcultures. As Schein (2010) explains, different subcultures can exist on each organizational level, meaning that while the culture may have shifted towards collaborative decision-making with directors on a senior level, this change had not extended to the supervisors who were not being included in decisions. As well, historical union issues and formal union rules and procedures negatively impacted organizational culture and constrained directors' influence. These issues appeared to contradict the agencies' mission, vision and values, such that they were not being lived in practice. Schein upholds this, noting that mission vision and values do not necessarily define an organization's culture and may not be reflected in leaders' behaviour.

Formal staff recognition was also limited and not embedded into the culture and some directors disagreed on its value. This issue is acknowledged in the literature; one of the simplest ways for leaders to influence staff behaviour is through rewards but consensus is required for this to be achieved (Schein, 2010). There were issues around change management in this agency. While some directors and supervisors were open to change, others noted challenges with

continuous change, lack of planning and follow through, resulting in negative consequences. Notably, failing to clearly identify the vision and solidify the results of change are prime reasons that change efforts fail (Lewis et al., 2012). Challenges also surfaced around performance management and discipline with staff. Directors became more controlling in their leadership approach with supervisors, instituting report cards as an accountability measure. This action seemed counterproductive, as it eroded trust with supervisors and conflicted with agency values. As Schein (2010) explains, leaders' behaviour may not reflect agency values if they conflict with effective organizational performance, in this case meeting external expectations. However, Schein also explains that if performance measures are misused, they violate the agency's cultural norms about how to treat members, which may explain why supervisors objected to report cards.

The multiple challenges noted above, such as lack of involvement in decisions, lack of meaningful staff recognition, lack of planned change management, controlling performance measures, and lack of sustained leadership development, took their toll. Supervisors were mostly dissatisfied in their role and felt overloaded with responsibilities. Their description of being "masters of nothing" was striking and they emphasized the need for more leadership training and development. While the directors may have been trying to adapt to the pressures of the external context, their directive decision-making and controlling leadership practices had negative repercussions. Similar dynamics have been reported in the literature, as directive approaches disempower staff, reduce trust and involvement (Lawler & Bilson, 2010), discourage innovation and organizational learning (Baldwin, 2004), and are incompatible with professional social work practice, leading to poor staff morale and motivation (Hardina et al., 2007).

My experience of conducting research in this agency mirrored its culture; while the directors were welcoming, they controlled the nature of feedback regarding the agency report.

For example, one director expressed concerns about some quotes and initially was reluctant to share the agency report with the supervisors. However, after discussing this issue with the director, they did agree to a follow-up presentation. The presentation went well overall. The supervisors appeared honest and forthright with their comments, while some of the directors initially seemed uncomfortable but listened and then responded to the findings. Both groups confirmed the themes resonated for them and they spent time discussing some priority issues. Their responses may have been limited, as the final agency report was not shared with them until after my presentation, although they committed to reviewing the report more thoroughly.

In summary, this agency case study serves as a positive example in several areas, strengthening and updating previous research on the benefits of: promoting innovation and social entrepreneurship (Germak & Singh, 2010; Hasenfeld, 2010a); fostering a learning culture, being open to feedback and accepting of mistakes (Hopkins & Austin, 2004); and proactively supporting leadership development (Hopkins et al., 2014; Lawler, 2007; Wuenschel, 2006). At the same time, the hierarchical culture and directive decision-making, closed communication and performance measures, lack of staff recognition and sustained leadership development, negatively impacted organizational culture and detoured mission vision and values, resulting in significant dissatisfaction on the supervisory level. These findings reinforce earlier research on bureaucratic organizations that negatively impacted social workers' empowerment and client service delivery (Cohen & Austin, 1997; Hardina et al., 2007; Shera & Page, 1995). These issues are difficult to overcome, and while restructuring efforts can be helpful, they are not sufficient if agency values are not lived in practice by directors and extended downward to supervisors. Research has shown that efforts to implement various change initiatives, in order to improve organizational performance, will fail if leaders do not also shift organizational culture (Cameron

& Quinn, 2006). Drumm (2012) reinforces these concerns, noting that most human service organizations have a hierarchical culture and are reactive to market changes; leadership vision, commitment and skill are required to shift this culture.

A key question that arose from these findings was, how do leaders maintain their commitment to innovation, a learning culture and leadership development, and resist the need to become more directive and hierarchical, given the pressures of new managerialism? There is some beneficial learning for social work leaders from this agency example, which may help to answer this question. In essence, leaders may need to safeguard their leadership practices and resist becoming more directive and hierarchical, as it is counterproductive to the organizational culture they may be trying to establish. This is not a simple endeavour, as organizations tend to become more hierarchical and market oriented over time (Cameron & Quinn, 2006). At the same time, leaders may also have to negotiate or “push back” with funders (i.e. MCYS) who have unrealistic expectations for funding accountabilities and measurable outcomes that threaten agency culture and viability. This raises the notion of leaders’ resistance to the current trend towards managerialism (Aronson & Sammon, 2010), as highlighted in the previous case example. On a provincial level, MCYS may want to reconsider the push for accountability, efficiency and measurable outcomes, as it appears to come at a steep price. The lack of fit between these measures and the nature of social work practice in human services is a known issue (Lawler & Bilson, 2010; Shera & Page, 1995).

Agency #1. In this agency, directors and supervisors varied their leadership practices between being consultative and directive depending on the circumstances and staff experience, consistent with a situational leadership approach (Hersey et al., 2007). For example, directors described leading from behind, consistent with a servant leadership approach (Hardina et al.,

2007), and supervisors described being more consultative with experienced and autonomous staff, consistent with a situational leadership approach (Hersey et al., 2007). This consultative approach may have been especially appropriate in a social work context, given the professional nature of social work staff (Healy, 2002) and their greater level of readiness towards autonomy. Other notable strengths included the senior leadership team recently being restructured with positive results, the agency was engaged in innovative fundraising and entrepreneurial activities, directors promoted a learning culture and were involved in several innovative service projects, and they strove to be open to feedback and change. Further investment in a learning culture by the directors in this agency is worthwhile, as a supportive learning culture has been linked to improvements in worker independence and well-being, learning and retention, team building and support, and service quality and outcomes (Hopkins & Austin, 2004). However, directors needed to embed this learning culture in practice and foster safety for staff to take risks with new initiatives, which are requirements for establishing a learning culture (Baldwin, 2004).

This agency faced multiple challenges similar to agency #3. Issues around trust and safety for supervisors were a recurring theme in this agency. The importance of trust is emphasized in the literature, as a safe culture is critical to workers feeling comfortable to take risks, and leaders are the primary influence to create these conditions (Austin & Hopkins, 2004). Past legacy with departmental divisions and a recent negative shift in tone had impacted the culture. A hierarchical culture was most pronounced in this agency, with directive decision-making and lack of supervisors' involvement in decisions, for example around the budget cuts. Directors had made attempts to reduce this hierarchy, by restructuring the senior management team. However, while the senior team engaged in collaborative decision-making and problem-

solving, their practice was inconsistent with supervisors and they admitted to being more directive.

Supervisors confirmed that the directors' current leadership practice was not participatory despite a flattened hierarchy, and they requested more clarity and transparency regarding input to decision-making. The lack of participatory decision-making in this agency is short-sighted, as it limits staff ability to influence the organization with their creative ideas (Baldwin, 2004; Hopkins & Austin, 2004). Supervisors reported a lack of safety to discuss this issue, which furthered distrust, in line with Lawler and Bilson's (2010) suggestion that controlling leadership practices reduce workers' trust and involvement. The challenge of adhering to inclusive processes is noted in the literature, as leaders may sometimes ascribe to a participatory approach in theory while operating from a hierarchy structure and retaining control over decision-making, causing confusion and frustration for staff (O'Connor & Netting, 2009).

There were also issues with how the directors shared information with supervisors and responded to feedback and mistakes. For example, directors chose not to share pertinent information with supervisors during the staff layoff process. While they defended these actions as exceptional situations requiring discretion, supervisors viewed this as a lack of transparency, which furthered trust issues. Directors also claimed to be open to feedback and accepting of mistakes, admitting their own to staff. However, supervisors recalled negative reactions and this too engendered trust issues. Trust is central to leaders' ability to influence others (Kramer, 2011) and directors' inconsistent practice conflicted with agency values and was cause for concern. Formal staff recognition was limited and not embedded into agency culture, although staff wellness received some focus; promoting staff recognition and wellness in daily practice might serve to enhance a more positive culture. As Schein (2010) explains, "if leaders are trying to

ensure that their values and assumptions will be learned, they must create a reward, promotion and status system that is consistent with those assumptions” (p. 248).

Other issues included inconsistent change management and performance evaluation. Some directors and supervisors recognized the importance of being open to change, while others noted the challenges with continuous change and lack of planning for implementation. This resulted in negative consequences and supervisors were frustrated as a result. The need for change management training was also highlighted. Challenges also surfaced around performance management and discipline. Directors assumed a laissez-faire approach, with inconsistent performance evaluation and follow through, and lack of clear measurement. For measurement to be effective, leaders need to agree on methods to measure results (Schein, 2010). Supervisors also felt a lack of safety and support to discuss these issues. According to Schein (2010) “what leaders consistently pay attention to, reward, control and react to emotionally communicates most clearly what their own priorities, goals and assumptions are” (p. 243). Therefore, if directors’ leadership was inconsistent with espoused organizational values, supervisors would likely ascribe more weight to directors’ actual practice. Schein also explains that if leaders’ behaviour is inconsistent, workers will adapt to these contradictory messages because those in leadership positions have too much power to be confronted. This may explain why supervisors were left feeling unsupported by directors and unable to address this issue with them.

The directors in this agency were just initiating leadership development and training with supervisors, reflecting an attempt to move away from the past legacy of minimal agency investment in this area. Both directors and supervisors emphasized the need to embed this learning into practice, and this was consistent with their report of needing to model a learning culture and acceptance of mistakes in practice. However, living these principles will be

challenging given their hierarchical culture and trust and safety issues, as a hierarchical culture is known to limit leaders' influence on culture (Drumm, 2012). While directors were mostly satisfied with their leadership practice, several supervisors were dissatisfied. The legacy of their previous director and the negative agency culture was impeding supervisors' progress. This theme suggests that leadership development can be compromised by a negative organizational culture.

My experience of conducting research in this agency mirrored their culture, as directors controlled the amount of engagement and feedback with participants. These directors were the most concerned about having supervisors' quotes included in the report, necessitating a discussion with them about research ethics (see Chapter 3, Methodology). The directors were very hesitant about sharing the report with supervisors and declined my offer to present the findings at the agency. One director provided some brief feedback regarding themes that resonated for them and committed to sharing the report with participants in future, which reportedly has been done; no further feedback has been received.

In summary, similar to agency #3, this agency serves as a positive example in some areas, strengthening and updating previous research on the benefits of: management restructuring (Hardina et al., 2007); fundraising, social entrepreneurship and innovative service projects (Germak & Singh, 2010; Hasenfeld, 2010a); promoting a learning culture and striving to be open to feedback and accepting of mistakes (Baldwin, 2004; Hopkins & Austin, 2004). However, despite some promising initiatives, this agency was facing a multitude of organizational issues, including a negative past legacy, hierarchical culture, directive decision-making and lack of involvement in decisions, limited information sharing and acceptance of mistakes, inconsistent change management and performance evaluation, and limited leadership development, resulting

in significant trust and safety issues for supervisors. While some directors were striving to address these issues, more progress was needed to shift organizational culture. Similar to agency #3, these findings reinforce earlier research on bureaucratic organizations that negatively impacted social workers' empowerment, client service delivery (Cohen & Austin, 1997; Hardina et al., 2007; Shera & Page, 1995), and involvement in organizational decisions (Baldwin, 2004; Hopkins & Austin, 2004). This negative impact is unfortunate, as previous research in child welfare has shown that collaborative leadership, participatory decision-making with teams, and opportunities for innovation are significantly related to a positive organizational climate and reduced staff turnover (Glisson, Dukes, & Green, 2006).

A key question that arose from these findings was, to what extent can leadership be practiced and developed in an agency plagued with multiple organizational culture issues? In response, it appears that when significant trust and safety issues exist, leaders will need to first focus their efforts on building trusting relationships and safety with staff (Lencioni, 2002). A supportive culture, inspirational leadership and trust are the preconditions leaders need to foster before organizational performance can be improved (Hardina et al., 2007). Moreover, when there are clashes between leadership practice and organizational culture resulting in incongruence, this impedes leadership development and organizational functioning (Cameron & Quinn, 2006). This agency case study may be instructive for social work leaders in human services: leaders will first need to address significant organizational culture issues before embarking on new initiatives; otherwise, research shows such initiatives are likely to fail (Cameron & Quinn, 2006).

Similarities and differences among the three case studies. The inclusion of multiple case studies with children's mental health and child welfare agencies was chosen to provide contextual variations among them. There were some notable similarities and differences among

the three agencies. Remarkably, as noted in Chapter 5, the external context appeared quite similar for all three agencies. These similarities included: continuous funding constraints, staff layoffs and service reductions; new ministry frameworks for system transformation, such as mergers and lead agencies; rising ministry expectations and data systems for accountability, evidence-informed practice and outcome measures; reduced community relationships; and a crisis in succession planning across the sector.

There were also some noteworthy differences among the three agencies, including their organizational structure, culture, mandates, and differential response to feedback. As described above, the organizational structures and cultures varied among the three agencies, with agency #2 having a flatter structure and collaborative culture, while agency #3 and #1 had a more hierarchical structure and culture despite recent shifts. These differences appeared to be affected both by the history of organizational culture and by the leadership approach of directors, suggesting that both of these variables have an influence on organizational development and functioning, which Schein (2010) upholds.

The mandates of the children's mental health and child welfare agencies were different (i.e. legislated versus voluntary services). A recent paper by McBeath et al. (2014) observes that child welfare agencies are constrained by institutional and political-economic factors, such as provincial legislation and policies, ministry standards and regulations, court and regulatory agencies and the market culture, which affect their operating structure and service delivery. Interestingly, despite different mandates, the children's mental health agencies were also constrained by many of these external factors (excluding legislation and court). Even so, leaders in child welfare agencies are viewed as pivotal to adapting and being responsive to these external demands, linking these varying forces with the management of their organizations (McBeath et

al., 2014). For the directors in agency #1, these external demands may have constrained their leadership practice and cultural development efforts.

The differential agency receptivity to feedback, and defensiveness in some cases, to the agency reports and presentations is also worth commenting on. An interesting and unexpected finding was how closely the participants' receptivity to feedback mirrored their agency culture, with agency #2 the most receptive, agency #3 somewhat receptive, and agency #1 unreceptive. Receptivity to feedback is important to change, as Schein (2010) explains, if leaders want to understand their leadership practice and organizational culture in order to make changes, it is necessary for them to study these. Internal organizational change can assist leaders to develop insight about the strengths and weaknesses of their culture so that they can modify their values and beliefs; this is essential for organizations to survive and function effectively.

However, Schein (2010) notes participants may not be prepared to accept the results of such analysis but rather engage in "defensive routines" (p. 186). This can occur especially in a group setting, where some members may be more receptive than others to feedback. This defensiveness was observed during the meeting with directors in agency #1, around the inclusion of supervisors' quotes in the agency report and subsequent decline of a follow-up presentation, and to some degree with the directors in agency #3 during the follow-up presentation. Schein suggests that researchers be clear with participants at the outset about the possible consequences. As the researcher, while I was clear with directors about the research questions and parameters of this study, perhaps I could have discussed possible consequences further with them. Schein also suggests that such research is most effective when the organizational leaders are motivated to adopt cultural changes, and there appeared to be different levels of motivation among the directors in the three agencies to shift their organizational culture in response to the feedback.

10.2 Reflections on Leadership Practice and Development

Leadership practice and approaches. There were some general themes arising from the findings around leadership conceptualization and practice that are worth highlighting. Directors and supervisors in all three agencies appeared knowledgeable about what the literature considers ideal leadership practices and they strove to live them in practice. Directors recognized their leadership influence on organizational culture and others as central and this is supported in the literature; leaders set the tone by embedding the culture in the organization (Schein, 2010). They endorsed and expanded on many of the leadership characteristics that have been identified within the social work and broader leadership literature such as: shared and achievable visions; role modelling through their behaviour, language, values and beliefs; positively influencing others through their positions and personal interactions; building trusting relationships through genuine interest and caring of others, visibility, working together, and balancing professional boundaries; strength-based teamwork, especially in the directors' groups; and awareness of positional power, using authority cautiously and managing conflict (Hardina et al., 2007; Holosko, 2009; Kouzes & Posner, 2007). While these leadership characteristics have been researched extensively in the business sector, they have been studied to a limited degree in social work (Holosko, 2009). This study provided an opportunity to explore these leadership characteristics further in practice. The findings contribute to the development of knowledge in the social work leadership literature, as there is evidence that leaders endorsed these primary leadership characteristics in their practice.

Directors and supervisors also endorsed needing various leadership skills, which differed depending on the hierarchy of their leadership position. For example, some directors emphasized leadership skills critical to senior leadership positions. These skills included: strategic and conceptual thinking to manage contradictions and paradoxes, problem-solving to manage

complexity and ambiguity, and business skills to manage funding and accountability requirements. Conceptual, strategic and business skills are considered more important at top leadership levels given the nature of these positions (Mumford et al., 2007; Northouse, 2013). In contrast, supervisors emphasized operationalizing the vision and providing resources to complete tasks, which is part of technical skills and considered important for supervisory level positions (Mumford et al., 2007). Both directors and supervisors emphasized the importance of influencing and motivating others toward a common goal. This influence is considered part of human skills and is needed equally in leadership positions at all levels (Northouse, 2013).

There were some challenges noted regarding leadership practice. For example, some supervisors discussed having less influence on organizational culture and being the “peanut butter and jelly” in the middle of the sandwich, which may have been due to their middle management position. As Perlmutter and Crook (2004) explain, supervisors in a middle management position are caught between the resource needs of staff and senior management expectations and this is known as an “administrative bind” (p.50). Supervisors across all three agencies were feeling overwhelmed due to the high expectations and downloaded responsibilities from directors. They were suffering under the burden of accountability, with increased demands for quality assurance and data management and lack of director support. While directors could ease this burden somewhat by “sharing the load” with supervisors, directors were also challenged to meet increasing ministry expectations. In effect, supervisors were “paying the price” for the broader ministry shift across the sector towards higher accountability and performance measures, known as new managerialism (Lawler, 2007).

Some directors also expressed concern about the supervisors’ teams and this concern raises questions as to why teamwork at the supervisory level had not been as well developed.

There were differing perspectives about the reason for this issue, from supervisors lacking leadership ability, to lack of investment in leadership development, to trust and safety issues. Whatever the reason, it appears that directors had invested considerable time and effort into building a strong senior leadership team and they may need to make a similar investment at the supervisory level, as leadership support and clarity is a critical factor for team empowerment and functioning to be successful (Abramson & Bronstein, 2004; Hardina et al., 2007). For example, supervisors could have been encouraged to address team process issues and engage in clear contracting around decision-making, roles and responsibilities, which may have fostered greater team cohesion, commitment, trust and openness (Abramson & Bronstein, 2004). As well, the transition from a front-line to management position is a significant change and can bring questions about role and identity (Austin, Regan, Gothard & Carnochan, 2013). Directors' recognition and support of this issue, including consistent investment in supervisors' leadership skill development, might help supervisors to successfully navigate this transition.

Directors and supervisors also ascribed to various leadership approaches noted in the literature, such as servant leadership (Keith, 2010), situational leadership (Hersey, Blanchard & Johnson, 2007) and participatory leadership (Hardina et al., 2007) to some degree. While the ascribed leadership approaches were consistent with emerging models of leadership (see Chapter 2, Literature Review), there were some inconsistencies with them being lived in practice. A key question in this study was whether a participatory leadership approach was feasible for leaders to enact as they contend with increasing demands and pressures from the external context. There were mixed findings in this area. A participatory approach was upheld as the ideal model in agency #2, and directors and supervisors strove to practice and embed it in agency culture, with positive results. This finding is reassuring, as participatory leadership approaches are known to

improve the quality, effectiveness and satisfaction with organizational decisions and lead to meaningful change (O'Connor & Netting, 2009). However, while the directors in agency #3 and #1 also valued a participatory approach, they did not practice this and cautioned that it requires time, clarity and limits on input and decision-making. These cautions are legitimate and have been acknowledged by other authors (Hardina et al., 2007; O'Connor & Netting, 2009).

There was also evidence that directors had shifted to more directive leadership practices and decision-making, with hierarchical structures and cultures, as a necessary response to the multiple demands they faced in the external context (Hasenfeld, 2010a; Healy, 2002). Notably, a participatory leadership approach is not compatible with hierarchical organizations and controlling leadership practices (Hardina et al., 2007). Thus, the phenomenon of “practice what you preach” may be hard to instill on a leadership level if desired approaches are incompatible with the organizational culture and the external context (Schein, 2010). As well, when leaders forfeit participatory leadership approaches, there is a definite cost to their organization in terms of quality client services, staff empowerment and satisfaction, and overall effectiveness (Hardina et al., 2007). These costs were confirmed in the current study, as the agencies with a more directive leadership approach suffered in terms of lack of supervisor satisfaction and involvement in decisions. These concerns also overshadowed discussion on client services, which is unfortunate, as the primary goal of an empowerment approach is quality client service delivery (Hardina et al., 2007).

Another interesting trend that emerged around leadership approaches was the notion of women and leadership practice. As noted in the literature review, the feminist perspective of leadership upholds that social work is gendered, as female staff predominate, they are primarily in direct service positions and are involved in emotional work (Hasenfeld, 2010b). This study

was no exception: the ratio of females to males in supervisory positions was almost three to one (20 females, 7 males); interestingly, the ratio of females to males in director positions was almost even, (8 females, 6 males) (see Appendix P, participant demographics). As well, the males were primarily concentrated in executive positions and were more predominant in one agency. Given the fact that social work is a female dominated profession (Hasenfeld, 2010b), the ratio of women to men in senior positions being almost equal suggests some gender inequity at this level. These findings suggest that while women have progressed in achieving leadership positions in human services, this is not a universal progression. Women's progression has been described as a labyrinth, with challenges that need to be navigated all along the way, not just in senior positions; however, the number of women who navigate the labyrinth successfully is increasing due to organizational culture changes, such as preparing women for management positions and establishing "family friendly HR practices" (Eagly & Carli, 2007, p. 70). Given the number of women in leadership positions in the current study, it appears that the cultures of these organizations supported their progression to some degree.

Women can also be disadvantaged in leadership positions by virtue of the incongruity between their gender and their leadership role. Essentially, women face a conflicting double standard based on gender stereotypes: as women they are expected to be feminine and compassionate; as leaders they are expected to be masculine and assertive (Eagly & Carli, 2007; Rhee & Sigler, 2015). This double standard is further complicated by the fact that in research studies, male leaders are perceived as more effective and preferred over female leaders, although participatory leadership is also favoured over an authoritarian style (Rhee & Sigler, 2015). However, women also have an advantage, as they demonstrate more transformational and participatory leadership styles, which are considered more effective in human services (Eagly &

Carli, 2007; Fisher, 2009). This advantage is borne out in the current study, as the women-led agency demonstrated more participatory and servant leadership styles, while the male-led agencies had shifted to a more directive leadership style. Moreover, the type of organizational culture is significant, as those with a participatory culture nurture female leadership (Rhee & Sigler, 2015), which also occurred in this study. Thus, promoting more women to senior leadership positions is a worthwhile endeavour in human services, as it is known to enhance organizational effectiveness and performance (Eagly & Carli, 2007; Rhee & Sigler, 2015).

Overall then, it appears that a range of leadership approaches may be suitable. While participatory leadership approaches have been upheld as the ideal, in reality they can be challenging to implement given the constraints in the present human services context. A feminist perspective of leadership that nurtures women in senior leadership positions may be helpful, as women are more likely to adopt a participatory approach. Situational leadership approaches that respond to this context may be helpful, although there are cautions about shifting to a directive leadership approach, given the negative impact on staff and organizational culture. Complexity leadership may also be relevant, as it focuses on leaders adapting to their environment and fostering creativity and innovation (Uhl Bien & Marion, 2011; see chapter 2). Although not expressly mentioned by the participants, there were examples of this approach during directors' discussions of social entrepreneurship activities. Further study of these emerging leadership approaches in broader human service contexts, including leaders' attempts to implement them in practice and their success in adapting to a complex external environment, may be a worthwhile area for future research.

Leadership development. Related to leadership approaches is the extent of leadership development undertaken. In this study, while directors in all three agencies recognized that

leadership development was essential, they varied in the extent and consistency of provision. The amount of investment in leadership development mirrored the level of supervisors' satisfaction, as supervisors who had more leadership development were more satisfied in this area. As noted in the introduction, the need for continued leadership development is a realistic concern, as most social workers have been promoted into leadership positions from the front-line and do not have the necessary knowledge, skills and training (Hopkins et al., 2014; Wuenschel, 2006). Also, social workers who are considering a transition from a direct practice to an administrative position are involved in "changing hats" and new leadership skills are required (Perlmutter & Crook, 2004, p. viii). The transition to a general management position is a significant change and can bring questions about role and identity (Austin, Regan, Gothard & Carnochan, 2013).

An area of leadership development worth noting is the type of skillset future leaders will require to succeed, given the complexity of the current human services context. Leadership skills such as visioning, influencing others, communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and recognition are considered foundational human skills and are equally needed in supervisory, middle and top management positions (Holosko, 2009; Kouzes & Posner, 2007; Mumford et al., 2007; Northouse, 2013). As well, there were some specific leadership skills that were lacking in all three agencies, such as well-planned change management strategies and clear decision-making protocols. Despite there being a multitude of organizational change models, this is an area that most leaders have received sparse training in (Lewis et al., 2012). There is also limited research on the influence of organizational culture and readiness on change (Austin & Claassen, 2008). Other leaders have also expressed a desire for skill development in decision-making (Hopkins et al., 2014). These areas may be worthwhile to pursue in future leadership development programs.

Senior leadership positions are especially complex, and as some of the directors noted, those foraying into these positions will need a diverse array of skills. The present study provided a beginning inventory of these skills: strategic and conceptual thinking to manage contradictions and paradoxes, problem-solving skills to manage complexity and ambiguity, networking skills with diverse cross-sectors, business management and technology skills to respond to funding and accountability requirements, fundraising and social entrepreneurship skills to foster innovation, and political acuity with government funders. The need for senior leaders to develop these skills is upheld by others, such as business skills (financial and information management, resource development and technology) and strategic skills (environmental scanning, strategic planning, problem solving to manage complexity) (Hopkins et al., 2014; Lewis et al., 2012; Mumford et al., 2007). By articulating the need for these emerging skillsets, this study may provide valuable future direction for those designing or researching leadership development programs specific to the present human services context.

Recently, leadership development programs have been proposed for human service organizations in the U.S. For example, there is a conceptual model to assist managers through the stages from emerging to thriving (Austin et al., 2013) and a national leadership competency training model for child welfare (Bernotavicz, McDaniel, Brittain & Dickinson, 2013). Some authors caution that formal leadership education and training is only part of leadership development, and suggest this should be supplanted with real-life experiences at work, such as 360-degree feedback, peer coaching and mentoring, and action learning through problem solving, to embed learning in practice and ensure knowledge transfer of learning and skill development (Hopkins et al., 2014; Lewis et al., 2012). The findings from this study support this cautionary note, demonstrating that leaders have a good understanding of ideal leadership

practices, but some of them experienced difficulty implementing these practices. These findings suggest that there is a need for context-specific leadership training and more nuanced discussions about the best way to offer leadership training in human services.

A recent study by Seidle, Fernandez and Perry (2016) upholds this finding, noting that leadership training models lack integration of theory and practice. These authors found training that combined class instruction, coaching, feedback and experiential learning led to improved leader and organizational performance; suggesting this type of leadership development is a worthwhile investment. Aligning with the idea of context specific training, some authors advocate that post-secondary education provide “opportunities to develop and use management and leadership skills seamlessly as a continuum across a range of organizational types and community settings” (Hopkins et al., 2014, p. 420).

The need for leadership development was acute given upcoming directors’ retirements and the impending crisis in succession planning identified in these agencies and across the sector. Similarly, others have noted a crisis in the non-profit sector with upcoming retirements, lack of succession planning and lack of skilled leaders (Hopkins et al., 2014). The sector was lamented by one director for not investing in leadership and organizational development, and ideal future leaders were considered social workers with business skills. This theme is consistent with the literature, as there is a rising trend for human service organizations to be managed by business leaders (Healy, 2002; Wuenschel, 2006) and recognition of the need to provide business management skills in Canadian schools of social work as a result (Westhues et al., 2001).

Directors varied in their opinions as to whether the complexity required in senior leadership positions can be learned, or is a matter of ability, igniting a longstanding debate noted in the literature (Lawler, 2007). Some directors perceived supervisors as lacking necessary

leadership skills, resulting in an ‘unbridgeable gap’ that would force external recruitment for management positions. Similarly, some authors note the rising trend to recruit externally to the profession for social work leadership positions (Wuenschel, 2006), while others suggest promoting staff to leadership positions from within the organization, cautioning against hiring external leaders whose values may not align with the culture (Schein, 2010). Given the apparent complexity of leadership in human services, to ensure that social workers are recruited as future leaders, as some authors advocate for (Healy, 2002; Wuenschel, 2006), they will need to be well prepared for these positions. Providing context specific leadership development and training that is embedded in everyday practice may be a priceless investment in these future social work leaders.

10.3 Reflections on the External Context

There were some general themes arising from the findings on the external context that are noteworthy. The emerging themes reflected a continuing trend towards new managerialism and a need for social work leaders to become proficient with business skills. The first emerging theme was the issue of scarce financial resources, which was threatening agency viability in some cases and required a shift to financially driven service decisions. Financial pressures were also prominent in child welfare, with the introduction of balanced budget legislation, a new funding formula, financial cutbacks and deficits leading to staff layoffs. This theme is consistent with others’ recent findings of widespread funding and staffing constraints despite increased service demand (Hopkins et al., 2014). In response, CMHO (2015c) advocates for sufficient government funding and leadership to support the new initiatives across the province.

On a positive note, some directors viewed these funding challenges as opportunities to demonstrate innovation through fundraising and social entrepreneurship activities, and some

authors support this as one way for agencies to successfully respond to current funding challenges (Germak & Singh, 2010). However, such endeavours will require social work leaders to develop fiscal literacy skills and to venture into more risk-taking activities and there are arguments on both sides of this topic. Recent research has found that human service leaders support the need for social innovation and business models due to competition for scarce funding (Cosner Berzin, Pitt-Catsoupes & Gaitan-Rossi, 2015). However, others argue that business logic and human service management principles logic conflict, and they critique social innovation as limited financial resources may be contingent on risk taking endeavours that have uncertain results (Hasenfeld, 2015). In the present study, there were some beginning examples of directors engaging in fundraising and marketing their services to others. Still, given the conflicting arguments, social work leaders may need to be cautious about venturing into more risk-taking financial endeavours, as they will need to do so without sacrificing social work values and the quality of client services.

Another emerging theme was the increasing ministry expectations for accountability, quality assurance, performance indicators and mapping of core services. This finding provides further evidence of a continuing trend in human service organizations toward new managerialism that focuses on accountability, efficiency and competition for resources (Hasenfeld, 2010a; Germak & Singh, 2010). Supervisors were feeling burdened with data management and quality assurance pressures and these negative consequences contradicted agency policies around maintaining staff wellness and satisfaction. This focus on accountability is documented in the current child and youth ministry transformation framework (MCYS, 2013) and it corresponds to a business management model of leadership (Lawler & Bilson, 2010). A cautionary note is needed in this area as well, as the ministry focus on measurable outcomes may not be relevant

for human services, where client outcomes are complex and not easily measured. As well, staff may be so preoccupied with accountability measures that they shortchange client interventions, which may become ineffective and not achieve desired client outcomes (Aronson & Sammon, 2000; Hopkins et al., 2014; Turner & Shera, 2005; Westhues et al., 2001).

The increased ministry demands also required more infrastructure resources to meet the growing expectations and the need for agencies to absorb these operational costs, with a risk to systemic sustainability, as noted by CMHO (May, 2013). Other authors have noted the current trend in human services towards a lack of sufficient funding, staffing and technology resources to respond to growing demands for service and accountability, requiring a need for “adaptive leadership” and innovation (Hopkins et al., 2014, p. 420). To successfully adapt to these demands, some directors recognized the need to promote innovation and creativity with staff and they lamented a ministry compliance culture that challenged their ability to do so. This issue presents a paradox: the ministry is pushing for market oriented accountability, while restricting the ability of funded agencies to fully participate in the innovative activities required for them to survive in this market. A concern that surfaces is how social work leaders will cope and ensure agency survival in an environment that both expects and constrains their ability to successfully adapt through innovative solutions. There is also the question of whether leaders can resist or refuse these conditions, as their funding is contingent on meeting these ministry expectations.

Collaborative community relationships were a common theme in all three agencies. Even so, the market culture was exerting a negative influence, with time and resource constraints due to competing priorities that reduced the level of involvement. The competitive lead agency application process added considerable pressure to the children’s mental health agencies. Unfortunately, the competitive nature of funding resources is an increasing reality for human

services (Germak & Singh, 2010). This competitive process is ironic, as the lead agency process also mandates system collaboration. There was a glimmer of hope, as the directors in these agencies were responding strategically, focusing on the ‘greater good,’ consulting with external colleagues and becoming involved provincially. The strength of these system partnerships will be critical for the directors embarking on lead agency system transformation. A spirit of collaboration rather than competition will be vital to their collective success, and this is reinforced in the ministry’s strategic directions and lead agency parameters (MCYS, March 2014, 2012). However, a concern that emerges is how social work leaders will maintain this value of collaboration with community partners when forced to compete with each other and explicitly argue their superior standing compared to other organizations in their network.

A collaborative community approach is upheld in the literature: a ‘big picture’ approach with cross-agency collaboration and developing relationships with key stakeholders are known ways to manage broader system change (Lewis, Packard & Lewis, 2012). For example, interagency collaboration has been promoted through collaborative service delivery systems (Packard, Patti, Daly & Tucker-Tatlow, 2013) and collaborative governance structures (Hodges, Ferreira, Mowery, & Novicki, 2013). To achieve system collaboration, “system leaders” are required to bring people together across sectors and generate innovative solutions to complex problems for the well-being of the whole system (Senge, Hamilton & Kania, 2015, p.28). A systems perspective might include environmental scanning, to monitor the political and socioeconomic trends and continuous change in the external environment in order to respond appropriately (Lewis et al., 2012). This systems approach is congruent with the notion of “collective leadership,” where leaders and stakeholders across different agencies “collaboratively

develop innovative solutions to both community and agency problems,” which some authors are advocating as the new leadership approach in human services (Hopkins et al., 2014, p. 421).

The demands of the external context also conflicted with ideal leadership practices and organizational structures. This struggle can be explained by contingency and institutional theories of organizational design. According to Donaldson (2008), contingency theory upholds that organizations will strive for optimal structures to fit internal contingencies, in order to promote internal effectiveness. This may explain why some directors endorsed a combination of servant and situational leadership approaches and flatter organizational structures, as they are considered ideal in human service organizations (Hardina et al., 2007). However, as Donaldson explains, institutional theory upholds that organizations will also conform by fitting their structure to the broader institutional context, in order to secure legitimacy and support from external institutions. These rewards include financial support and survival. This may explain why some of the directors shifted to a more directive leadership approach and hierarchical structure, even though these are considered ineffective in human services (Hardina et al., 2007). The directors may have been trying to adapt to external ministry demands for accountability, efficiency and resource constraints, in order to secure essential funding and ensure organizational viability, as evidenced by their strategic discussions in this area.

Donaldson (2008) further explains that organizational structures based on contingency and institutional theories often conflict with each other, such that organizations can maximize benefits in one area but not both at the same time. Essentially, there is a trade-off, and organizations may choose to sacrifice internal effectiveness for external support or vice versa, depending on what is most vital. This may explain why some directors chose to prioritize meeting external ministry demands (external support), despite negative consequences, such as

increased stress and downloading responsibilities to supervisors (lack of internal effectiveness). An important consideration is what human service organizations lose through such compromises. From the cases studied, it appears they may pay a steep price, as the increasing focus on meeting external demands undercut their primary agenda of providing quality client services and supporting staff. These consequences are concerning, and they echo previous research on the negative impact of new managerialism, such as reduced client services and inadequate funding and staffing resources (Aronson & Sammon, 2000; Hopkins et al., 2014; Turner & Shera, 2005; Westhues et al., 2001).

Leaders' resistance to the impact of new managerialism may also be relevant here. For example, in the current study, some directors cautioned about the risk of becoming more market driven and spoke of having to push back with the ministry regarding unrealistic accountability expectations and measurable outcomes. Others spoke of becoming more innovative in response to external demands, considering social entrepreneurship activities. These findings mirror those in a recent study by Aronson and Smith (2010), who found that female managers in Ontario were concerned with the impact of new managerialism, such as the narrowing of client services and pressure to present agencies favourably to governing bodies to secure support and legitimacy. These trends conflicted with the managers' commitment to social justice and public service, and they found ways to resist these trends, such as refusing government directives and broadening service eligibility. These findings are important, as Aronson and Smith acknowledge the dearth of literature on the impact of restructuring for managers, especially in the Canadian context.

These findings, although sparse, signal the need for leaders to engage in more advocacy efforts around the impact of new managerialism on organizations, staff and the clients they serve. Plitt Donaldson (2008) suggests that organizations can develop a 'progressive advocacy

program’ to promote social change and challenge structural and power inequities. To support advocacy practice, Plitt Donaldson recommends ‘building blocks’: strong agency leadership, meaningful client involvement, participation in coalitions, designated staff, reflective opportunities, and diverse funding sources (p. 33). Similarly, Webster (2008) proposes a framework of ethical leadership approaches, applied to organizational contexts, to enact social work values of social justice and challenge managerialism. However, Plitt Donaldson cautions that agencies embarking on such endeavours need to consider the organization’s readiness to change, and include staff and client expert knowledge. Securing adequate funding resources to engage in advocacy and social action can also be a challenge, as governments can be reluctant to fund such endeavours (Hardina et al., 2007). Even so, these recommendations may be worth considering not only by the leaders in the current study but more broadly for leaders in human services, as they continue to face mounting pressures induced by the relentless encroachment of new managerialism on their organizations.

10.4 Concluding Thoughts

Overall, the rising external pressures and complexity these agencies were facing reveals the constant change and adaptation required by social work leaders to ensure organizational survival while striving to provide quality client services. The challenge becomes how to balance these two competing forces, and at what cost to the organization, staff and clients they serve. There may be some fruitful lessons for leaders from these agency examples: developing business skills and social entrepreneurship endeavours to harness funding resources, fostering a culture of risk-taking and innovation in programs and services, garnering technology and resources and preparing their staff for system transformation, greater systemic collaboration with community

partners, and investing in leadership development across the sector. Hopkins et al. (2014) uphold these recommendations:

The rapidity of social, economic and technological change requires non-profit leaders to change their mindset and behaviours...connecting and weaving relationships within the agency and across boundaries in the community, engaging in continuous learning, experimenting, risk taking, collaborating, integrating change, being creative with limited resources, fostering an adaptive organizational culture, and inspiring, facilitating, and supporting agency and community members to do the same. p. 421

However, a caution is necessary, as these efforts may result in negative consequences: a business approach may conflict with preserving agency values and quality client services; risk-taking and innovation may be challenging with ministry requirements; accountability measures may be ineffective and shortchange desired client outcomes; new initiatives may be experienced as overwhelming especially given limited infrastructure resources; community collaboration may be difficult in a competitive environment; and sector leadership development resources may be scant. Hasenfeld (2015, p. 4) observes that “the neo-liberal logic...is riddled with contradictions and ambiguities” and he suggests leaders exploit these inherent contradictions by engaging in political action and advocacy to challenge the market culture. Similarly, Teram (2010) suggests making the consequences of such contradictions public rather than keeping them within the boundaries of the organization. These suggestions align with the concept of leaders’ resistance to new managerialism (Aronson & Smith, 2010) and developing a progressive advocacy program (Plitt Donaldson, 2008), as noted above.

It is ironic that the ministry’s current strategic plan focuses on both program outcomes, evaluation, evidence-based research, accountability and resource oversight on the one hand; and

cross-sector collaboration, service integration, organizational excellence, inspired and skilled workers, and innovative leadership on the other hand (MCYS, March 2014). It appears that these directions are paradoxical and fundamentally conflict, based on the findings in this study. The ministry may need to reconsider the feasibility of these contradictory directions and the potential cost to quality client services and staff wellness that will result if agencies are not provided with the necessary supports and resources to achieve these objectives. One CMHO position statement states that “MCYS needs to support a measured transition where the lead agency model is properly resourced, thoughtful and planned...for successful implementation” (Warren, Johnston, Cicek & Bustard, 2013, p.1).

Given these contradictions, more research is necessary to explore leadership strategies that simultaneously challenge these contradictions while operating within them. One possible area for future research might be following up the lead agency system transformation process with selected agencies, including how well directors are meeting this challenge. Some authors suggest that multi-sector collaboration will be needed “to build trusting partnerships across sectors, to increase collective responsibility and to facilitate comprehensive child and youth mental health services with clearer access points” (Warren, Ruffolo, Bustard & Moran, 2014, p.1). They provide key recommendations for stakeholders from diverse sectors working together, around leadership, partnership and collaboration, client services, planning and evaluation, resources and training. These recommendations may provide a useful starting point to evaluate lead agency transformation processes across the sector in future research.

Given the complexity of the current human services context, future research could explore the application of various emerging models of leadership to successfully adapt to this context. This might include a blending of participatory, feminist, situational and possibly

complexity leadership approaches, given their relative merits in the current study. New models of collective leadership, emphasizing inclusion, shared resources, and cross-sector partnerships, are advocated to develop innovation solutions and successful adaptation to complex problems and technological change (Hopkins et al., 2014). Collective leadership is congruent with the principles of participatory leadership explored in this study, and it holds the best potential for leaders across the sector to pool resources and creatively develop quality client services (Hopkins et al., 2014). This type of leadership would be particularly relevant with female leaders, as they are known to gravitate to these approaches (Eagly & Carli, 2007). Detailing best practices for including staff and clients in leadership would also be worthwhile (Hardina et al., 2007), especially as they were not included in the current study.

Another potential area of future research is exploring the type of leadership development and training required for leaders to succeed in the current context. The present study provided a beginning inventory of skills future leaders will need, especially senior leaders, several of which have been endorsed by others. These included conceptual thinking, resolving contradictions and paradoxes, political acuity with government funders, networking with diverse sectors, business management and fiscal literacy skills, technology and data management, resource development and technology, fundraising, social entrepreneurship and innovation. Organizational readiness for change, well-planned change management strategies, and clear decision-making protocols and skills might also be worthwhile areas to pursue in future leadership development programs, as they were lacking in the present study and more broadly lacking in leadership training and research (Lewis et al., 2012; Austin & Claassen, 2008; Hopkins et al., 2014). The need for context-specific training and embedding learning in practice was also raised as a cautionary note. Given the complexity of the present human services context, it is evident that future social work

leaders will need a myriad of skills to succeed, and the ministry, agencies and educational institutions all have a vital role to play in this.

Appendices

Chapter 2: Conceptual Framework	Pages
A. Core Leadership and Organizational Characteristics	266
B. Conceptual Framework of Leadership Approaches	267
C. Summary of Research Evidence	268-269
D. Listing of Social Work Studies	270-273
E. Competing Values Framework	274
 Chapter 3: Methodology	
F. Summary of Research Proposal for Agencies	275
G. Agency Screening Checklist	276
H. Schedule of Data Collection	277-278
I. Data Collection Methods for each Agency	278
J. Interview Guide for Directors	279-280
K. Focus Group Guide for Supervisors	281-282
L. Supervisor Questionnaire	283
M. Observation Guide	284
N. Document Review Guide	285
O. Participant Demographics – blank form	286
P. Participant Demographics – all three agencies	286
Q. Informed Consent Statement – version A and B (conflict of interest)	287-289
R. Coding of Participants' Quotes	290
S. Triangulation of Multiple Methods	291

Appendix A- Core Leadership and Organizational Characteristics

Type of Characteristic	Details of Characteristic
Leadership characteristics Based on five practices of leadership (Kouzes & Posner, 2007); core social work leadership attributes (Holosko, 2009)	Leadership as relationship, credibility as foundation: honesty and integrity(trust), future orientation and decisiveness, inspiration and positive energy, competence and confidence Vision (create shared vision, inspire others) Influence others (model by example, live shared values) Teamwork (enable others to act, build trust, collaboration) Problem-solving (challenge process, take risks, learning) Recognition (celebrate positive changes, success)
Leadership practices Based on participatory leadership approaches (transformational, servant, distributed, empowering, feminist, complexity)	Relationships (build trust, safety, honesty, integrity) Motivate/support others (strength based, encouragement) Manage authority (empower staff, reducing hierarchy) Deal with conflict (collaboration, admit mistakes) Decision-making (involve staff, promote consensus) Promote learning (encourage innovation, shared learning) Contextual (consider context, diversity, complexity of situation)
Leadership influence on culture (Schein, 2004)	Role modelling behaviour (promote agency values) Response to change (encourage innovation) Reaction mistakes (accept mistakes) Promote/discipline others (constructive feedback) Share information/respond to feedback (open communication)
Organizational culture characteristics (Schein, 2004; Baldwin, 2004)	Mission, vision, values (shared) Organizational structure (formal hierarchy vs. informal network) Decision-making processes (top down vs. participatory) Change management (bureaucratic vs. adaptive) Support for learning (innovation, opportunities, safety, networks)

Appendix B: Conceptual Framework of Leadership Approaches

(Lawler & Bilson, 2010, p. 20)

Underlying Assumptions	Rational Scientific	Reflective-Pluralist
Nature of Reality	Modernist, reality external and objective	Post-modern, reality socially constructed, multiple
Management Practice	Transferable regardless of context	Depends on situation, context
Organizations/change	Stable/change planned, incremental, predictable	Changing/change emergent, unpredictable
Leadership	Bureaucratic, rational	Reflective, social-emotional
Ethics	Pragmatic	Feminist, compassionate
Decision-making	Objective data, logic	Participatory, consensus
Approaches/Models		
Basis/focus	Based on organizational position, focused on results	Based on process, focused on relationships
Examples	Transactional leadership, McGregor's X and Y theories, leader-member exchange, competency models	Transformational leadership, servant, distributed, empowering, feminist, complexity theory
Critique		
Strengths	Meet current requirements for accountability, efficiency	Respond to organizational complexity, congruent with social work values, improve organizational process, meaningful change
Weaknesses	Reduce trust with staff, constrain client practice, positional one-way power, disempower staff and clients, lack consideration of complexities and reflection	Time-consuming, limit required efficiency and measurable outcomes, may be inconsistency between espoused values and practice

Appendix C – Summary of Research Evidence

Core Social Work Function	Leadership Responses	Benefits/Evidence
Professional Development		
Leadership training for social workers on core values, skills <i>(relationship skills-respect, trust, integrity, empathy, participatory; social work skills-diversity, critical reflection, strengths-based)</i>	-Provide flexibility and training for female and minority staff to assume leadership positions -Support leadership training in reflective practice, learning culture, empowering leadership practices	-social workers trained in values of social justice, empowerment, guides decision-making/practice -research supports SW values and participatory approach in leadership role
Worker Empowerment		
a) Meaningful involvement in organizational decisions <i>(Control over work; information, power, autonomy to make decisions; creative opportunities; advocacy re client services; flexible work arrangements)</i>	-leaders model commitment to staff empowerment, political advocacy -consult with workers before making major decisions and changes -ensure safe and trusting culture to allow disagreement, leaders need group facilitation, team building skills -reward/reinforce positive behaviour -provide autonomy to make decisions -support flexibility in job scheduling	-increases staff autonomy, empowerment, self-efficacy, satisfaction, wellness, trust -improves staff motivation, commitment, productivity, tolerance for ambiguity/stress, job retention -leads to improved service and organizational performance -upholds core SW values
b) Flatten organizational hierarchy to self-directed teams <i>(Collaborative teamwork; flexible, shared, emergent, leadership; responsible for goals, results, evaluation; skilled in group process, reflection, strength based practice, trust and respect)</i>	-leaders provide: support; resources; information; training in group process, goal setting, evaluation; set standards -build in equity re decision-making, sharing resources and authority -team problem-solving, decisions -sensitivity training towards clients -recognition/rewards, foster positive team and organizational climate	-develops learning culture, innovative practices -increases team cohesion -improves staff morale, motivation, commitment, productivity, initiative -positive worker/client relationship, improved service delivery

Core Social Work Function	Leadership Responses	Benefits/Evidence
Programs/Service Delivery		
Staff and client advocacy in organizational policies, program design, service delivery and evaluation <i>(mutual assessment/treatment planning, self-advocacy, team involvement in goal setting, service development, delivery, evaluation of service outcomes)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -provide clients with training in leadership skills and decision-making, information re service options -hire former clients as staff -involve teams in every stage of process -evidence informed practice/data -collaborative problem solving, decentralized decision-making, involve staff in creative solutions re programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -increases staff and client trust, voice, creative ideas -improves staff morale and productivity, increases support for leadership decisions -improves client access and quality of services
Adaptive Learning Culture		
Collaborative learning culture, creative ideas and innovation, informal, emergent process <i>(safety and trust promotes learning, problem-solving, risk taking, experimentation, innovation)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -learning opportunities to encourage divergent thinking, multiple perspective -allow dissent, challenge status quo - learn by questioning, active listening -open to new ideas, aware of biases, humility, integrity, transparency -create safe and trusting climate, set the example, be involved in learning -coach, mentor, support staff, involve in decisions and problem-solving - encourage risk taking, experiment, tolerate ambiguity, mistakes, reward efforts not just successes -use developmental evaluation, rather than measurable outcomes only -hire diverse staff- bring new ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -increase staff self-efficacy, independence, well-being, team building, support, safety, trust -develop more effective, innovative solutions, learning and problem-solving with clients -improves client service and outcomes, staff retention, organizational benefits -recognizes non-linear change -acknowledges multiple perspectives, diversity -promotes creativity, adaptability, responds to complexity
Critical reflection and learning, share knowledge to develop	-participatory, democratic leadership nurtures networks of relationships, processes must be	-uncover social workers' biases in work-important in person-centered care, diversity

learning organization (<i>learning cycles-try out creative ideas, reflect on patterns, learn through feedback, adapt and act</i>)	embedded into organizational culture to learn -pay attention to individual and team level learning, expand to organization	-develop new practices, services
--	---	----------------------------------

Appendix D -Listing of Research Studies

Author/Year Type of Study	Context	Purpose	Results/Recommendations
A. Social Work Values			
Fischbach, Smerz, Findlay, Williams, & Cox (2007) Qualitative (interviews)	2 female leaders, Board, executive council, directors, workers, in a social service agency in U.S.	Multidimensional impact of Co-CEO model on leadership, ability to move agency forward, include worker and community views	Co-CEO's shared power, decision-making, through discussion, consensus and trust. Benefits: improved decisions, staff confidence, trust, teamwork, reduced stress, coverage issues
Healy (2002) Qualitative (interviews)	34 social welfare managers in social service organizations in Australia	Tensions between principles of social justice and social welfare management in a market culture	2 core leadership themes: social justice (individual and structural), participatory decision-making (client and worker involvement), relationships, trust, respect, empowerment, and strengths-based approach important
Mizrahi & Berger (2005) Mixed methods (exploratory descriptive survey design)	750 hospitals in U.S. stratified random sample over 3 time periods (1992-2000)	Impact of changing health care system on social work leaders accomplishments, opportunities, failures, threats	Leaders challenged to preserve core values, mission of social work in programs, services, driven by market culture rather than person centered care
Rank & Hutchison (2000) Qualitative (telephone survey)	150 deans/ directors from CSWE/NASW programs in U.S	How deans and directors perceive social work leadership	Five core leadership elements in social work: pro-action, values and ethics, empowerment, vision, communication. Unique to profession: code of ethics, systemic perspective, participatory leadership style, social justice
B. Workers Decision making			
Bowen &	Business/service	Look at factors	Requires distributing power,

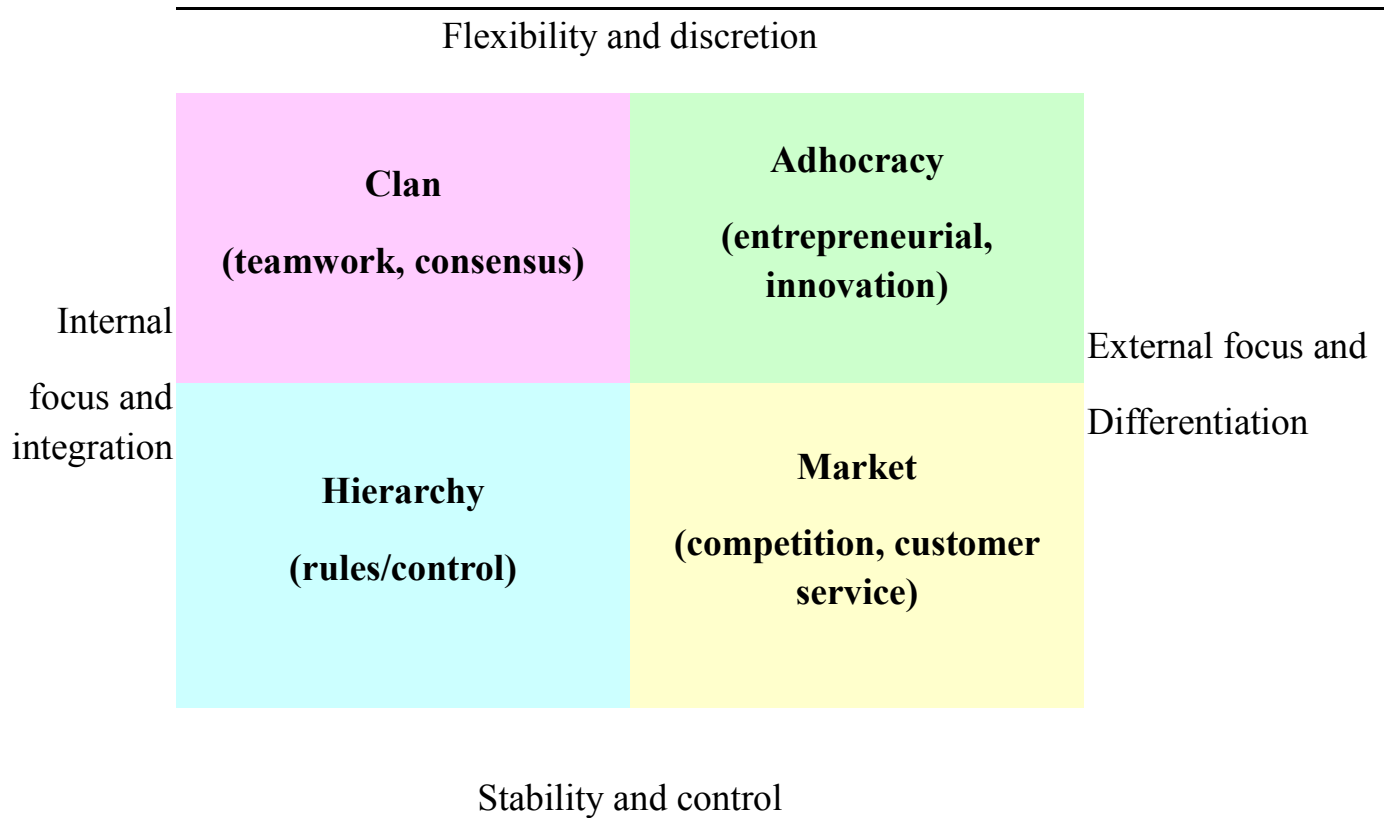
Lawler (1995) Conceptual and empirical research review	context	contributing to employee empowerment	information, knowledge, rewards Staff control over work, involvement in decisions, increases worker satisfaction, quality of service
Author/Year Type of Study	Context	Purpose	Results/Recommendations
Cohen & Austin (1997) Case examples using model	Child Welfare Service, Philadelphia, U.S. Social service and mental health agencies in California, U.S.	Experiment across agency to increase worker participation Empowered staff to develop innovative proposals to improve services	Improved service coordination and communication across teams, unclear re staff satisfaction/performance 8 grants awarded for service improvements using staff ideas Limits-model not widespread, recommend action research
Gutierrez, GlenMaye, & DeLois (1995) Qualitative, Exploratory, Multiple case study (interviews)	6 HSO's in Washington, U.S. using empowerment practice	Influences on leaders, workers ability to implement empowerment practice	Supports: staff development (training, program development, rewards, flexible work/self-care); collaborative approach (share power, teams, peer supervision, safety, take risks/new programs); leadership (vision, support, practice empowerment) Barriers: funding, social environment, intrapersonal interpersonal factors Recommend: further research
Hardina (2011) Quantitative exploratory descriptive (onlinesurvey)	Social service organizations for low income clients across U.S.	Whether managers use theories, models, activities of participatory decision-making	Majority of leaders (77%) use participatory leadership approaches that empower staff Limit: self-report by senior leaders, client/staff/outcomes not included
Pine, Warsh, & Maluccio (1998) Case example	Child welfare agency in U.S. state	Participatory leadership project to improve agency performance in reuniting foster children/families	65 recommendations; increased staff understanding, commitment to change, morale and creativity; increased staff knowledge and skills; connection with other staff and community agencies
Petter et al. (2002) Qualitative interviews	36 welfare workers in human services in U.S.	How workers (street level bureaucrats) value empowerment	All workers valued autonomy and skills/tools, variable valuing of involvement in decision-making, receiving agency information, opportunities for creativity

Author/Year Type of Study	Context	Purpose	Results/Recommendations
Wallach & Mueller (2006) Quantitative questionnaires regression analysis	160 ethnic-minority para-professionals in public/ private sector HSO's in Hawaii	Whether job characteristics predict empowerment in para-professionals	Increased participation in decisions, positive supervisory relationships, peer support, low role ambiguity and overload predict almost 50% variance in staff empowerment Recommend: further research tie to outcomes, other HSO contexts
Teams			
Cohen & Austin (1997)	See above	See above	See above
Gutierrez et al. (1995)	See above	See above	See above
Wallach & Mueller (2006)	See above	See above	See above
D. Programs and Service Delivery			
Mizrahi & Berger (2005) See above	See above	See above	Leaders had negative attitudes, transactional style, less influence to create new programs/services, increased pressure for services, budget reductions, challenged with professional survival and system reorganization in market culture
Packard, Patti, Daly, Tucker-Tatlow, Farrell (2008) Qualitative (Instruments used in phone interviews)	59 executive directors, program managers in 9 human service agencies in U.S.	Effective leadership strategies during budget restraints to preserve client access, staff morale, productivity, program quality	Key strategic themes: collaborative problem solving leadership approach, decentralized decision-making, involving staff in creating solutions re program priorities, efficiencies, also taking a big picture approach, communicating with staff and stakeholders, using data to making decisions
E. Innovation, Collaborative Learning Culture			
Baldwin (2004) Qualitative (case example, cooperative	Social service department, national voluntary	How social workers implemented and influenced policy	Social workers not have supportive team context to reflect on practice, policies/procedures imposed, managers used

inquiry)	organization		supervision, team discussion for control not learning
Author/Year Type of Study	Context	Purpose	Results/Recommendations
Barnoff, Purnima, Coleman (2006) Qualitative (interviews)	26 practitioners in 38 feminist agencies in Toronto, Canada	How social work agencies implement anti-oppressive practice at level of organization	Staff development, building knowledge impeded by funding shortages, organizational survival, although agencies committed to anti-oppression
Bartle et al. (2002) see above	See above	See above	Leadership commitment critical to support client/staff reflection, evaluation, feedback, creativity
Briggs & McBeath (2009) Qualitative (case study)	Child welfare and mental health programs in one social service agency in U.S.	Use of evidence based management to improve program performance	Increased focus on evidence-based management approaches, conflict with emergent nature of innovation, ignore contextual factors-relationships, politics, cultural diversity, client input
Glisson, Dukes, & Green (2006) Quantitative (experimental design, control group)	235 caseworkers from 10 urban, 16 rural case management teams in one U.S. state	Impact of ARC organizational intervention on caseworker turnover climate, culture	ARC-collaborative leadership, participatory decision-making with teams, opportunities for innovation significantly related to positive organizational climate, reduced staff turnover
Gutierrez et al. (1995) See above	See above	See above	Collaborative leadership approach encourages social workers' risk-taking, new program development
Jaskyte (2004) Quantitative (questionnaires)	247 workers in 19 developmental human service agencies in U.S.	Relationship between transformational leadership, organizational culture and innovation	Leadership strongly related to organizational values and cultural consensus, inversely related to organizational innovation

Appendix E: Competing Values Framework of Organizational Culture

(Cameron & Quinn, 2006)



http://changingminds.org/explanations/culture/competing_values.html

Appendix F – Summary of Research Proposal for Agencies

Title of Research Study:

Leadership practice and organizational culture in children's service organizations: Exploring the potential for a participatory approach and a collaborative culture

By Rosemary Vito, MSW, PhD (Candidate)

Faculty of Social Work, Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, Ont.

Purpose and Focus of Study:

This research study is a collaborative project with selected agencies in the child welfare and children's mental service system in southern Ontario. These agencies are currently faced with funding constraints and increased ministry expectations for accountability, efficiency and performance measurement. Effective leadership is critical to manage these challenges. One promising model is participatory leadership, which focuses on empowering and engaging staff, and developing innovative solutions through a collaborative learning culture. This study is intended to explore the relevance and viability of this model in particular organizational context. Specifically, this study is designed to explore the following questions: (a) how do leaders understand and practice leadership? (b) how is leaders' practice influencing and being shaped by organizational culture? (c) what factors help or hinder these leadership practices and organizational processes? (d) other questions that reflect agencies' contexts and interests

Proposed Agency Involvement:

The researcher will have an initial meeting with the leadership team of each agency to further explain the study, confirm their interest and availability to participate, and review confidentiality, ethical guidelines and sharing findings. A schedule will be established to gather information, over a 3 month period, and may include the following:

- Individual, audiotaped interviews with senior leaders (approx. 1 hour each)
- Focus groups with supervisors, audiotaped (approx. 1.5 hours)
- Observations of senior leaders' practice and leadership team meetings (1 day/meetings)
- Analysis of selected agency documents (e.g. minutes of leadership/Board meetings, researcher will review over course of 1 week)

Following information gathering, a detailed research report will be written and findings will be shared with the leadership team and supervisors before finalizing.

Agency Benefits of Participation:

Agencies will be provided with an understanding of how their agency is currently functioning in terms of leadership practice and organizational culture. This will be informed by the current literature and possible directions for moving forward with change processes will be provided. These findings may be shared at a leadership professional development day.

Timeframe:

The projected timeframe for this study is January-June, 2014. Information will be collected from each agency during this timeframe. The researcher will negotiate the specific timeline with each agency depending on their availability.

Appendix G – Agency Screening Checklist

Name of Agency/Contact Person:

Date/Type of Contact:

Topics to Review	Questions to Discuss
Present powerpoint on participatory leadership and collaborative culture	Does it fit with their agency structure/culture/leadership philosophy? Are they interested in studying this further in their agency?
Review proposed summary of research	What do they hope to get out of the study? What questions do they have?
Discuss organizational structure and methods	Interviews with senior leaders-how large are their teams, is this feasible? Focus groups with supervisors/staff-how many are there, would they participate? Observations-of leaders with supervisor/staff teams, are they willing? Agency documents-minutes of leadership team/Board meetings, agency committees, MVV/org chart, training records, etc.-are these accessible?
Benefits/Risks of participation	Report of agency functioning re leadership practice and organizational culture. Include recommendations for moving forward with change processes. No anticipated risks. Will maintain confidentiality and anonymity of respondents, will have research ethics board approval.
Discuss timeline, confirm availability to participate	2 timelines: Jan-March, April-June, which timeframe is best for them? Will need commitment from them to proceed.
Other questions/considerations	

Appendix H – Schedule of Data Collection: March-May, 2014

Agency/Date	Data Collected
Agency #1	Reviewed all agency documents, prepared summary of document review, prior to starting other data collection
Jan. 15/23, March 21	Met with director and supervisor groups separately to review research project, confidentiality and informed consent, conflict of interest, obtain signed consents, and hand out participant demographics sheets (2 meetings, 1 hour each) Met with Director of HR to schedule individual interviews with directors, focus groups with supervisors, and observation of senior management team
April 7	Individual audiotaped interviews with directors #2 and #5 (1.5 hours each)
April 16	Individual audiotaped interviews with director #1 and #3 (1.5 hours each) Observation of senior management team meeting, all 5 directors (3 hours)
April 17	Individual audiotaped interview with director #4
April 25/ May 2	Completion of audiotaped individual interviews with director #1 (1 hour) and director #3 (2 hours) Met with executive director to review information from agency documents
May 7/8	2 audiotaped focus groups with supervisors (2 hours each) Collection of supervisors' questionnaires (sent out previously by email)
Agency #2	Reviewed all agency documents, prepared summary of document review, prior to starting other data collection
March 19	Met with executive director to review information from agency documents (1 hour) Met with director and supervisor groups separately to review research project, confidentiality and informed consent, obtain signed consents, schedule individual interviews and focus groups, and hand out participant demographics sheets (2 meetings, 1 hour each) Observation of senior management team meeting, 4 directors (1.5 hours)
April 2	Individual audiotaped interviews with directors #2, #3 and #4 (1.5 hours each)
April 9	Observation of service team meeting, with director #2 and supervisors (2 hours) Observation of all-staff meeting (1 hour) Completion of audiotaped interview with director #2 (1 hour) Meeting with chair of 'value team' (1 hour)
April 10	2 audiotaped focus groups with supervisors (2 hours each), collection of supervisors' questionnaires (sent out previously by email) Individual audiotaped interview with director #1 (2 hours)
April 16	Audiotaped service meeting with director #3 and supervisors (2 hours, not observed due to scheduling conflicts, participants verbally consented to audiotaping)
Agency #3:	Reviewed all agency documents, prepared summary of document review, prior to starting other data collection
April 1	Met with directors and supervisors together to review research project, confidentiality and informed consent, obtain signed consents, schedule individual interviews and focus groups, and hand out participant demographics sheets (1 hour)

	Observation of full management meeting, all directors and supervisors (3 hours) Observation of senior management meeting, 5 directors (3 hours)
April 9	Individual audiotaped interview with director #1
April 23	Individual audiotaped interview with director #2 Audiotaped focus group with supervisors (2 hours), collection of questionnaires
April 24	Individual audiotaped interviews with directors #3, #4, and #5 Met with executive director to review information from agency documents (1 hour)

Appendix I – Data Collection Methods for each Agency

Method/Total	Agency #1	Agency #2	Agency #3
14 individual interviews with directors (avg. 1.5 hours)	5 interviews, 2 had 2 sessions	4 interviews, 1 had 2 sessions	5 interviews, 1 had 2 sessions
5 focus groups with 26 supervisors (avg. 2 hours)	2 focus groups (5 and 8 participants)	2 focus groups (6 and 2 participants, 1 absent)	1 focus group (5 participants)
26 supervisors' questionnaires	13 individual questionnaires	9 individual questionnaires	4 (of 5) individual questionnaires
7 observations of agency meetings	1 directors' meeting 0 supervisors' meeting (requested but not provided)	1 all-staff meeting 1 directors' meeting 2 service team meetings with supervisors (1 audiotaped due to time conflicts)	1 directors' meeting 1 full management meeting (directors and supervisors)
Document review common reports: unique reports:	-Agency brochures -Website, history -Mission, vision values, strategic plan -Service principles -Organizational chart -Minutes of senior leadership meetings (2012-2013) -Annual reports (2011-2013) -Minutes of Board meetings (2012-2013) -Learning Culture and Signs of Safety documents	Agency brochures -Website, history -Mission, vision values, strategic plan -Service principles -Organizational chart -Minutes of senior leadership meetings (2012-2013) -Policy and procedure manual, Accreditation Report 2011 -Budget Targets, Human Resources, Performance Appraisal -Leadership Guides -Minutes/TOR, Value Team meetings	Agency brochures -Website, history -Mission, vision values, strategic plan -Service principles -Organizational chart -Minutes of senior leadership meetings (2012-2013) -Policy and procedure manual, Accreditation Report 2009 -Budget Targets, Human Resources, Performance Appraisal -Leadership Guides -Ministry Service Descriptions

3 individual meetings with executive directors/3 others	1 individual meeting	1 individual meeting 1 individual meeting with psychologist re quality assurance	1 individual meeting 2 informal consults with directors
---	----------------------	---	--

Appendix J - Interview Guide

Date and Time:

Agency (coded as 1, 2 or 3):

Participant (position only):

1. What does leadership mean to you? Include examples.
 - *Vision?*
 - *Influencing others?*
 - *Teamwork?*
 - *Problem solving?*
 - *Recognition?*
2. How would you describe your leadership practice with your supervisors/staff? Include examples.
 - *Relationships?*
 - *Motivate/support others?*
 - *Manage authority in role?*
 - *Deal with conflict?*
 - *Decision making?*
 - *Promote learning?*
3. To what extent are you satisfied with your leadership practice? If not satisfied, what is your desired practice and what steps are you taking to shift this? Include examples.
 - *Individual/relationship change*
 - *Structural/systemic changes*
4. How does your leadership practice influence organizational culture? Include examples.
 - *Role model behaviour?*
 - *Response to change?*
 - *Reaction to mistakes?*
 - *Provide rewards, resources?*
 - *Promote/discipline others?*
 - *Share information/respond to feedback?*
5. How does the organizational culture influence your leadership practice? Include examples.
 - *Mission, vision, values?*
 - *Organizational structure/rules?*
 - *Decision-making processes?*
 - *Change management?*

- *Program/service development?*
 - *Orientation to learning?*
6. How does the external organizational context affect your leadership practice? Include examples.
 - *Resource/funding issues*
 - *Ministry directions/legislation*
 - *Inter-organizational networks*
 - *Community/stakeholder expectations*
 7. What formal/informal training have you completed around leadership? How helpful is it in your current role? Include examples.
 - *Formal training (conferences, continuing education)*
 - *Informal learning (reading, mentoring, discussion)*
 8. All things considered, where do you think your agency is in terms of leadership development? Include examples.
 - *Just beginning/actively working on it/almost there*
 9. Follow up question: Your approach to leadership seems to be participatory; can you tell me more about the thinking behind your leadership approach? OR the literature seems to consider participatory approaches as ideal for HSO's, what is your thinking about these approaches?
 - *Relationships*
 - *Power*
 - *Decision making*
 - *Learning*
 - *Diversity*
 10. Have I missed anything important?

Tips:

- *Ask all participants same questions, allow for follow-up questions to participants' responses as interview evolves*
- *Provide short explanation of study, reassure re anonymity and confidentiality of responses, provide informed consent statement to sign*
- *If participants speak in general/abstract terms, ask for examples*

Reference: Barlow, C.A. (2010). Interviews. Encyclopedia of Case Study Research, 496-500.

Appendix K – Focus Group Guide for Supervisors

Date and Time:

Agency (coded as 1, 2 or 3):

Participants (positions only):

1. What does leadership mean to you? (each answers) Include examples.
 - *Vision?*
 - *Influencing others?*
 - *Teamwork?*
 - *Problem solving?*
 - *Recognition?*
2. How would you describe your leadership practice with your teams/staff? Include examples.
 - *Relationships?*
 - *Motivate/support others?*
 - *Manage authority in role?*
 - *Deal with conflict?*
 - *Decision making?*
 - *Promote learning?*
3. To what extent are you satisfied with your leadership practice? If not satisfied, what is your desired practice and what steps are you taking to shift this? Include examples.
 - *Individual/relationship changes*
 - *Structural/systemic changes*
4. How does your leadership practice influence organizational culture? Include examples.
 - *Role model behaviour?*
 - *Response to change?*
 - *Reaction to mistakes?*
 - *Provide rewards, resources?*
 - *Promote/discipline others?*
 - *Share information/respond to feedback?*
5. How does the organizational culture influence your leadership practice? Include examples.
 - *Mission, vision, values?*
 - *Organizational structure/rules*
 - *Decision-making processes?*
 - *Change management?*
 - *Handling of mistakes?*
 - *Program/service development?*
 - *Orientation to learning?*

6. How does the external organizational context affect your leadership practice? Include examples.
 - *Resource/funding issues*
 - *Ministry directions/legislation*
 - *Inter-organizational networks*
 - *Community/stakeholder expectations*
7. What formal/informal training have you completed around leadership? How helpful is it in your current role? Include examples.
 - *Formal training (conferences, continuing education)*
 - *Informal learning (reading, mentoring, discussion)*
8. All things considered, where do you think your agency is in terms of leadership development? Include examples.
 - *Just beginning/actively working on it/almost there*
9. Follow up question: Your approach to leadership seems to be participatory; can you tell me more about the thinking behind your leadership approach? OR the literature seems to consider participatory approaches as ideal for HSO's, what is your thinking about these approaches?
 - *Relationships*
 - *Power*
 - *Decision making*
 - *Learning*
 - *Diversity*
10. Have I missed anything important?

Tips:

- *Length 90 minute meeting (schedule 2 hours)*
- *Group size 6-10 participants (invite 20% more to allow for no-shows, allow all members to speak, spontaneous discussion, depth and breadth of data)*
- *3-5 groups helps to verify data, determine influence by group dynamics*
- *Follow semi-structured interview guide, 4-5 questions/topic areas (1st question identify common themes, 2nd question consider their connection to topic, next questions focus on key topic areas, ending questions reflect back on their/others' comments, use 'all things considered' and summary question 'have I missed anything').*
- *If participants speak in general/abstract terms, ask for examples (Eli Teram)*

Reference: Barlow, C.A. (2010). Interviews. Encyclopedia of Case Study Research, 496-500.

Appendix L: Supervisor Questionnaire

Date:

Agency (coded as 1, 2 or 3):

Participant (position only):

Instructions: Please complete this prior to participating in the focus group. There is space at the end to add your reflections from the focus group. Please hand this into the researcher at the end of the focus group. All responses will be kept confidential.

1a) How would you describe your leadership practice with your teams/staff?

1b) How satisfied are you with your leadership practice? If not satisfied, how are you changing this?

2a) How does your leadership practice influence organizational culture?

2b) How does the organizational culture influence your leadership practice?

3a) What formal/informal training have you completed around leadership?

3b) Where do you think your agency is in terms of leadership development and organizational culture?

4) Additional reflections from the focus group (use back of sheet if needed)

Appendix M – Observation Guide

Date and Time:

Agency (coded as 1, 2 or 3):

Type of Meeting:

Structure:

- Who chairs meeting? Who attends? (*shared leadership, implicit power*)
- How is agenda decided? (*supervisor/worker input*)
- What types of issues are discussed? (*strategic/operational issues*)
- Is reference made to the agency's mission, vision, values? (*visioning*)
- Do staff/clients attend board/committee meetings? (*inclusive*)

Culture:

- What is the relationship between leaders and staff (*formal vs. informal*)
- How is trust and safety fostered? (*encouragement, acceptance, respect*)
- What happens when staff voice opinions? (*listened to vs. shut down*)
- How are mistakes/issues handled? (*learning vs. punitive*)
- How do staff relate to each other? (*collaborate vs. compete*)

Worker/Client Involvement:

- How are organizational decisions made? (*top down vs. supervisor/worker input*)
- How much focus is given to client service? (*client voice/input*)
- How much focus is given to staff concerns? (*worker support*)
- Are there informal/formal ways for client/staff input (*participatory processes*)
- Are staff/clients made aware of pressing organizational issues? (*transparency*)

Macro Context:

- To what extent does government funding cuts/ministry directions predominate? (*preoccupation with organizational survival and change*)
- To what extent does accountability/efficiency predominate? (*preoccupation with performance measures and outcomes*)
- How are agency leaders constrained in their leadership practice because of these influences? (*coping/adaptive responses*)

Reflective notes:

- What am I seeing, feeling, experiencing, learning?

Tips:

- *Pay attention/be present to make accurate, reliable, relevant observations*
- *Be aware of what is going on at multiple levels: nature of setting, what people are saying/doing, interactions/other events, what is relevant to topic*
- *Be immersed in setting, constantly question meaning of observations*
- *Acknowledge own perspective/position/experience that may influence perceptions (reflect on own values, beliefs, assumptions)*
- *Write extensive field notes (what saw, heard, felt, smelled, experienced)*
- *Discuss observations with participants to enhance reliability and validity*
- *Compare with other data methods to increase insights/understanding*
- *Be careful not to respond to inquiries about my impression of the organization (Eli Teram)*

Reference: Pauly, B. M. (2010). Direct observation as evidence. *Encyclopedia of Case Study Research*, 302-305.

Appendix N – Document Review Guide

Agency: (coded as 1, 2 or 3)

History/Mandate/Services
Catchment area
Mission, Vision, Values, Service Philosophy
Size/Budget (funding body, type/# of staff, type/# clients)
Diversity representation in staff/clients
Structure (org chart, physical space, policies, procedures)
Human Resources (conflict resolution, performance appraisal)
Organizational Culture
Training on leadership/Mgmt. development
Current challenges (funding, gov't directions)
Innovative projects/services
Other (agency reports, accreditation, etc.)

Appendix O – Participant Demographics, Blank Form

Agency (coded as 1, 2 or 3):

Group (leader or supervisor):

Instructions: Please complete the following chart and hand it into the researcher at the end of your interview/focus group. This information is to record the demographics for the leader and supervisor groups (not individuals). All information will be kept confidential.

Age:	
Gender:	
Culture/ethnicity:	
Educational Qualifications:	
Years/type of experience in current position:	
Years/type of experience in previous positions:	
Previous supervisor and/or leadership training	

Appendix P –Participant Demographics –All Three Agencies

Position	Gender	Age Range	Culture/ Ethnicity	Educational Qualifications	Current Position	Previous Positions
Director	8 females 6 males	40-49 (2) 50-59 (8) 60-69 (3) 70+ (1)	Canadian/ Caucasian 2 French Cndn, 1 German, 1 First Nation	BA/BSW (8) MSW (5) MA/MED (2) PhD (1) Add.Cert.(6)	1-5 yrs (7) 6-10 yrs (2) 11-20 yrs(3) 20-30 yrs(1) 40+yrs (1)	1-5 yrs (1) 6-10 yrs (2) 11-20 yrs (7) 20-30 yrs (3) 30+yrs (1)
Super- visor	20 females 7 males	30-39 (2) 40-49(14) 50-59 (6) 60-69 (3) N/A (2)	Canadian/ Caucasian 1 Polish 1 Dutch 1 Irish, German	CYW/SSW (7) BA/BSW (12) MSW (12) PhD/other (2) N/A (1)	1-5 yrs (9) 6-10 yrs (6) 11-20 yrs(9) 21-30 yrs(2) 30+ yrs (1)	1-5 yrs (4) 6-10 yrs (8) 11-20 yrs(11) 20+ yrs (3) N/A (1)

Appendix Q –Informed Consent Statement, version A

WILFRID LAURIER UNIVERSITY INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT

Leadership Practice in Children’s Service Organizations: Exploring the Potential for a Participatory Approach and a Learning Culture

Researcher: Rosemary Vito, PhD© Student, Faculty of Social Work, vito1170@mylaurier.ca

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Eli Teram, PhD Professor, Faculty of Social Work, eteram@wlu.ca

You are invited to participate in a research study for this researcher’s dissertation. The purpose of this study is to explore leadership practice in children’s service organizations. Specifically, the relevance and viability of a participatory leadership approach and collaborative learning culture will be explored. The leadership and supervisor teams in one child welfare and two children’s mental health agencies in southwestern Ontario are involved, and there are over 50 potential participants. The executive director in your agency has reviewed the study details and has given permission for this study to be conducted.

INFORMATION

During this study, you will be asked and observed regarding your leadership practice and organizational culture. Leadership team members will be asked to participate in an individual, audiotaped interview with this researcher (1 hour), and be observed during leadership and supervisor team meetings (no added time). Supervisor team members will be asked to participate in an audiotaped focus group (1.5 hours) and an observation of their supervisor team meeting (no added time). This researcher will take hand written notes during the observations. Selected agency documents will also be reviewed (e.g. minutes of team meetings, training records). This researcher will be the sole person collecting the data, during the period of February-June 2014. The audiotapes will be used for research purposes only to transcribe the interviews and focus groups, and this researcher will be the sole person accessing them. The audiotapes will not be used for any other purpose without your additional permission.

RISKS

You will be encouraged to share only what information is comfortable to you. You will be given the opportunity to decline participation, or to decline answering any specific question. In the focus groups, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, as everyone will hear each other’s answers. However, you will be asked to maintain confidentiality and not discuss each other’s responses outside of the focus group. This researcher will not disclose your identity, participation or comments with anyone else.

BENEFITS

The expected benefits associated with your participation include a presentation and a written report of how your agency is currently functioning in terms of leadership practice and organizational culture, with possible directions for moving forward with change processes. You will have an opportunity to review this report before it is finalized. Findings may also be shared with professional associations, at conferences in teaching and journal publication.

Participant’s Initials _____

CONFIDENTIALITY

The confidentiality of your information and anonymity of your identity will be protected throughout the process. The individual positions (not names) of participants and agency number (coded as 1, 2 or 3) will be recorded with the data. Names will not be used in the agency or dissertation reports, journal publications or presentations. Direct quotations may be used in the research findings; however, this researcher will contact you by email and ask for your permission before using any specific quotations that could potentially identify you in any reports or presentations. You have the right to participate without being quoted, and your identity will not be disclosed if you choose not to participate in the study or refuse to respond to some questions. The information will be stored securely; electronic data will be password protected and paper copies will be kept in a locked cabinet in this researcher's office. Raw data will be retained for a period of ten years, after which time it will be destroyed by this researcher.

CONTACT

If you have any questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact the researcher, Rosemary Vito, at vito1170@mylaurier.ca. You may also contact Eli Teram, faculty advisor at eteram@wlu.ca and 519-884-0710 ext. 5262. This project has been reviewed and approved by the University Research Ethics Board. If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact Dr. Robert Basso, Chair, University Research Ethics Board, Wilfrid Laurier University, 519-884-1970, ext. 4994 or rbasso@wlu.ca

PARTICIPATION

Your participation in this study is voluntary; you may decline to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty and without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you withdraw from the study, every attempt will be made to remove your data from the study, and have it destroyed. You have the right to omit any question(s)/ procedure(s) you choose.

FEEDBACK AND PUBLICATION

The findings from this research study will be shared with the participants through a follow-up presentation and written report to each agency following data analysis. Research findings may also be disseminated through a dissertation report, journal publications, presentations at academic and professional conferences, professional associations such as the Ontario Association of Children's Aid societies (OACAS) and Children's Mental Health Ontario (CMHO), as well as teaching in faculties of social work.

CONSENT

I have read and understand the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this study.

Participant's signature _____ Date _____

Researcher's signature _____ Date _____

[] I agree [] do not agree, to having my quotations used in the final report. I understand that my permission will be sought before using any potentially identifying quotations.

Participant's signature _____ Date _____

Researcher's signature _____ Date _____

Informed Consent Statement – version B (conflict of interest sections)

RISKS

There is also a potential conflict of interest. The information you share with this researcher will remain confidential at all times and will not be disclosed. You have the right to decline participation based on this conflict of interest (you can privately indicate this under the 'consent' heading on the back of this form).

CONSENT

I have read and understand the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I am aware of the potential conflict of interest and [] I agree [] do not agree, to participate in this study.

Participant's signature _____ Date _____

Researcher's signature _____ Date _____

Appendix R – Coding of Participants’ Quotes

Agency #1

A1D1-A1D5 = Agency 1, one of five directors in this agency, includes 2 Directors of Service, 2 Admin Directors and the Executive Director

A1FG1, A1FG2 = Agency 1, one of two Focus Groups (5 and 8 supervisors)

A1SQ = Agency 1, Supervisors’ Questionnaires

Agency #2

A2D1-A2D4 = Agency 2, one of four directors in this agency, includes 2 Directors of Service, 1 Admin Director and the Executive Director

A2FG1, A2FG2 = Agency 2, one of two Focus Groups (6 and 2 supervisors)

A2SQ = Agency 2, Supervisors’ Questionnaires

Agency #3

A3D1-A3D5 = Agency 3, one of five directors in this agency, includes 2 Directors of Service, 2 Admin Directors and the Executive Director

A3FG1 = Agency 3, Focus Group (5 supervisors)

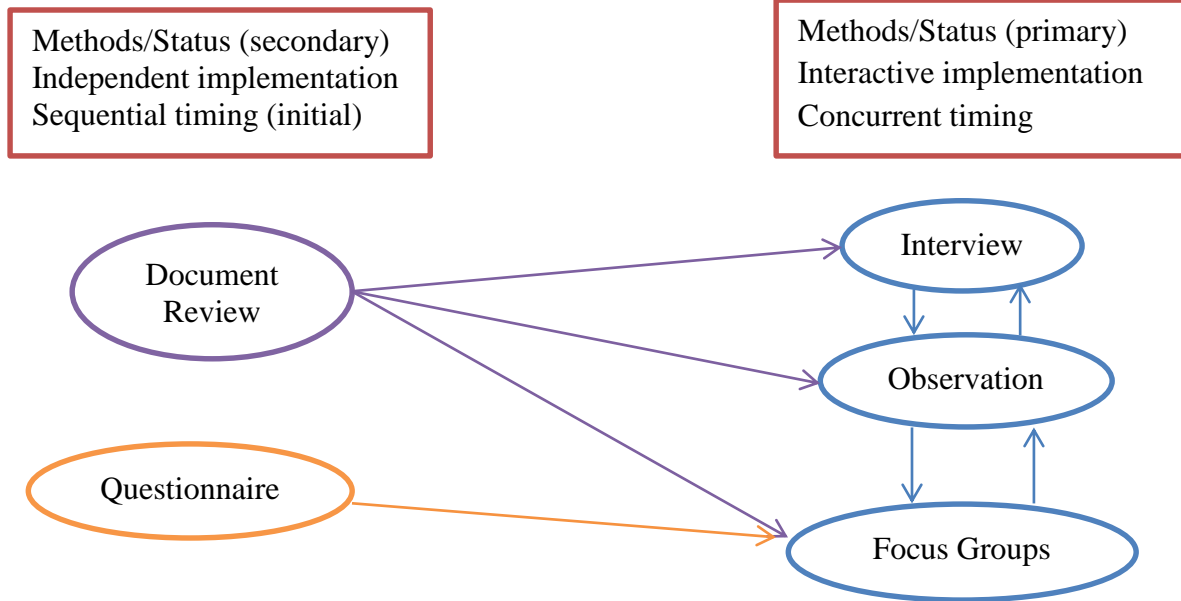
A3SQ = Agency 3, Supervisors’ Questionnaires

Appendix S - Triangulation of Multiple Methods

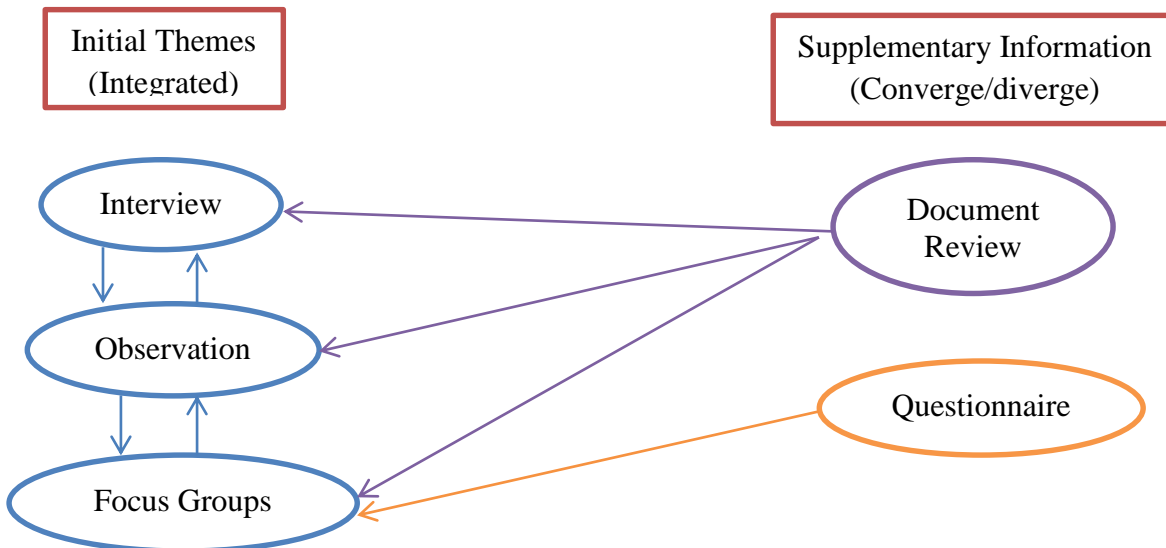
(based on conceptual framework developed by Greene et al., 1989)

Interpretive Paradigm and Leadership Topic (similar for all methods)

DATA COLLECTION



DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION



References

- Abramson, J. S., & Bronstein, L.R. (2004). Group process dynamics and skills in interdisciplinary teamwork. In C. D. Garvin, L. M. Gutierrez & M. J. Galinsky (Eds.), *Handbook of social work with groups* (pp. 384-399). New York, NY: The Guilford Press.
- Alimo-Metcalfe, B. (2010). An investigation of female and male constructs of leadership and empowerment. *Gender in Management*, 25(8), 640-648.
- Anand, S., Hu, J., Liden, R., & Vidyarthi, P. (2011). Leader-member exchange: Recent research findings and prospects for the future. In A. Bryman, D. Collinson, K. Grint, B. Jackson & M. Uhl-Bien (Eds.), *The sage handbook of leadership* (pp.311-325). London, England: Sage.
- Aronson, J., & Sammon, S. (2000). Practice amid social service cuts and restructuring: Working with the contradictions of “small victories.” *Canadian Social Work Review*, 17(2), 167-187.
- Aronson, J., & Smith, K. (2010). Managing restructured social services: Expanding the social? *British Journal of Social Work*, 40, 530-547.
- Austin, M.J., & Claassen, J. (2008). Implementing evidence-based practice in human service organizations: Preliminary lessons from the frontlines. *Journal of Evidence-Based Social Work*, 5(1-2), 271-293.
- Austin, M. J., & Hopkins, K. (2004). Defining the learning organization. In M. J. Austin & K. M. Hopkins (Eds.), *Supervision as collaboration in the human services* (pp. 3-10). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Austin, M.J., Regan, K., Gothard, S., & Carnochan, S. (2013) Becoming a manager in non-profit human service organizations: Making the transition from specialist to generalist. *Administration in Social Work* (37), 372-385.
- Avolio, B. J., Walumba, F.O., & Weber, T.J. (2009). Leadership: Current theories, research and future direction. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 60, 421-49.
- Baldwin, M. (2004). Critical reflection: Opportunities and threats to professional learning and service development in social work organizations. In N. Gould & M. Baldwin (Eds.), *Social work, critical reflection and the learning organization* (pp. 41-55). Burlington, VT: Ashgate.
- Barlow, C. A. (2010). Interviews. *Encyclopedia of Case Study Research*, 496-500. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781412957397.n182>
- Barnoff, L., George, P., & Coleman, B. (2006). Operating in survival mode: Challenges to implementing anti-oppressive practice in feminist social service agencies in Toronto. *Canadian Social Work Review*, 23(102), 41-58.
- Bartle, E., Couchonnal, G., Canda, E., & Staker, M. (2002). Empowerment as a dynamically developing concept for practice: Lessons learned from organizational ethnography. *Social Work*, 47(1), 32-43.
- Bernotavicz, F., McDaniel., N.C., Brittain, C., Dickinson, N.S. (2013). Leadership in a changing environment: A leadership model for child welfare. *Administration in Social Work*, 37, 401-417.
- Bisman, C. (2004). Social work values: The moral code of the profession. *British Journal of Social Work*, 34, 109-123.

- Bolden, R. (2011). Distributed leadership in organizations: A review of theory and research. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 13(3), 251-269.
- Bowen, D.E., & Lawler, E.E. (1995). Empowering service employees. *Sloan Management Review*, 36(4), 73-84.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, (3), 77-101.
- Briggs, H.E., & McBeath, B. (2009). Evidence-based management: Origins, challenges, and implications for social service administration. *Administration in Social Work*, 33, 242-261.
- Broten, L. (Nov. 29, 2010). *Minister Laurel Broten's speech to Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies: Consultation and HR symposium*. Retrieved from <http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/english/news/speeches/11292010.aspx>
- Burrell, G., & Morgan, G. (1979). *Sociological paradigms and organisational analysis: Elements of the sociology of corporate life*. London: Heinemann Educational.
- CASW (2005). Code of ethics and guidelines for ethical practice. *Canadian Association of Social Workers*. Retrieved from <http://www.case-acts.ca>
- Cameron, K.S., & Quinn, R.E. (2006). *Diagnosing and changing organizational culture: Based on the competing values framework*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.
- Campbell, S. (2010). Comparative case study. *Encyclopedia of Case Study Research*, 175-177. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781412957397.n64>

- Children's Mental Health Ontario (May, 2013). A CMHO position statement. Towards a sustainable future: Working together to transform Ontario's child and youth mental health system-Part 1. Retrieved from: <http://www.kidsmentalhealth.ca/documents/res-towards-a-sustainable-future.pdf>
- Children's Mental Health Ontario (2014). *Pre-budget submission 2014*. Retrieved from http://www.kidsmentalhealth.ca/documents/cmho_pre-budget_submission_2014_january_31.pdf
- Children's Mental Health Ontario (2015). *Pre-budget submission 2015*. Retrieved from <http://www.kidsmentalhealth.ca/documents/CMHO-PreBudget-Submission-2015-16.pdf>
- Children's Mental Health Ontario (2015b). *2015 report card: child & youth mental health – moving towards a fully functioning system*. Retrieved from <http://www.kidsmentalhealth.ca/documents/cmho-report-card-2015-english.pdf>
- Children's Mental Health Ontario (Oct. 2015c). *Envisioning a future residential system of care: A summary of key feedback and suggestions for system improvement from stakeholders across Ontario*. Retrieved from [file:///C:/Users/Owner/Downloads/CMHO Environmental Scan Residential.pdf](file:///C:/Users/Owner/Downloads/CMHO_Environmental_Scan_Residential.pdf)
- Children's Mental Health Ontario (2016). *Improving mental health outcomes for Ontario's children and youth: 2016 pre-budget submission*. Retrieved from <http://files.ctctcdn.com/314f3f09501/9d2c194a-05ea-471e-aa4f-570f651e8327.pdf?ver=1454535550000>
- Cohen, B., & Austin, M. (1997). Transforming social service organizations through the empowerment of staff. *Journal of Community Practice*, 4(2), 35-50.

- Corden, A., & Sainsbury, R. (2006). *Using verbatim quotations in reporting qualitative social research: Researcher's views*. The University of York: Social Policy Research Unit.
ISBN: 978-1-871713-98-5
- Cosner Berzin, S., Pitt-Catsoupes, M., & Gaitan-Rossi, P. (2015). Defining our own future: Service leaders on social innovation. *Human Service Organizations: Management, Leadership & Governance*, 39, 412-425.
- Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2005). *The sage handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Diaz-Saenz, H. (2011). Transformational leadership. In A. Bryman, D. Collinson, K. Grint, B. Jackson & M. Uhl-Bien (Eds.), *The sage handbook of leadership* (pp.299-310). London, England: Sage.
- Donaldson, L. (2008). The conflict between contingency and institutional theories of organizational design. In R.M. Burton et al. (eds.), *Designing organizations: 21st century approaches* (pp.3-20). New York, NY: Springer.
- Drumm, M. (2012). Culture change in the public sector. *Institute for Research and Innovation in Social Services*, 17, 1-9. Retrieved from <http://www.iriss.org.uk/resources/culture-change-public-sector>
- Drummond, D. (2012). *Commission on the reform of Ontario's public services. Public services for Ontarions: A path to sustainability and excellence* (chapter 8: social programs). Queen's Printer for Ontario. Retrieved from <http://www.fin.gov.on.ca/en/reformcommission/chapters/ch8.html>

- Eagly, A.H., & Carli, L.L. (2007). Women and the labyrinth of leadership. *Harvard Business Review*, 85(9), 63-71.
- Fischbach, L.M., Smerz, C., Findlay, G., Williams, C., & Cox, A. (2007). Co-CEO's: A new leadership paradigm for social service agencies. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Social Services*, 88(1), p.30-34.
- Fisher, E. (2009). Motivation and leadership in social work management: A review of theories and related studies. *Administration in Social Work*, 33, 347-367.
- Flyvbjerg, B. (2011). Case study. In N.K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The sage handbook of qualitative research* (p. 301-316). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Foster, M.K., & Meinhard, A.G. (2002). A contingency view of the responses of voluntary social service organizations in Ontario to government cutbacks. *Canadian Journal of Administrative Sciences*, 19(1), 27-41.
- Freymond, N., Moore, D., Scott, A., Spencer, K. & Buckingham-Rivard, L. (2012). Changing the way we think about child welfare services in Ontario: Questions and answers about early help. *Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies Journal*, 57(2), 2-11.
- Germak, A.J., & Singh, K.K. (2010). Social entrepreneurship: Changing the way social workers do business. *Administration in Social Work*, 34, 79-95.
- Glisson, C., Dukes, D., & Green, P. (2006). The effects of the ARC organizational intervention on caseworker turnover, climate, and culture in children's service systems. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 30, 855-880.
- Greene, J.C., Caracelli, V.J., & Graham, W.F. (1989). Toward a conceptual framework for mixed-method evaluation design. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 11(3), 255-274.

- Grint, K. (2011). A history of leadership. In A. Bryman, D. Collinson, K. Grint, B. Jackson & M. Uhl-Bien (Eds.), *The sage handbook of leadership* (pp. 3-14). London, England: Sage.
- Guba, E., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1988). Do inquiry paradigms imply inquiry methodologies? In D. M. Fetterman (Ed.), *Qualitative approaches to evaluation in education* (pp. 89-115). New York, NY: Praeger.
- Gutierrez, L., GlenMaye, L., & DeLois, K. (1995). The organizational context for empowerment practice: Implications for social work administration. *Social Work, 40*(2), 249-258.
- Hardina, D., Middleton, J., Montana, S., & Simpson, R. (2007). *An empowering approach to managing social service organizations*. New York, NY: Springer.
- Hardina, D. (2011). Are social service managers encouraging consumer participation in decision making in organizations? *Administration in Social Work, 35*, 117-137.
- Hasenfeld, Y. (2010a). Introduction. In Y. Hasenfeld, *Human services as complex organizations* (2nd ed., pp. 1-5). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Hasenfeld, Y. (2010b). The attributes of human service organizations. In Y. Hasenfeld, *Human services as complex organizations* (2nd ed., pp. 9-32). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Hasenfeld, Y. (2010c). Theoretical approaches to human service organizations. In Y. Hasenfeld, *Human services as complex organizations* (2nd ed., pp. 33-57). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Hasenfeld, Y. (2015). What exactly is human services management? *Human Service Organizations: Management, Leadership & Governance, 39*, 1-5.
- Healy, K. (2002). Managing human services in a market environment: What role for social workers? *British Journal of Social Work, 32*, 527-540.

- Hersey, P., Blanchard, K., & Johnson, D. (2007). *Management of organizational behaviour: Leading human resources* (9th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Hodges, S., Ferreira, K., Mowery, D., & Novicki, E. (2013). Who's in charge here? Structures for collaborative governance in children's mental health. *Administration in Social Work*, 37, 418-432.
- Holosko, M. J. (2009). Social work leadership: Identifying core attributes. *Journal of Human Behaviour in the Social Environment*, 19, 448-459.
- Hopkins, K., & Austin, M. J. (2004). The changing nature of human services and supervision. In M. J. Austin & K. M. Hopkins (Eds.), *Supervision as collaboration in the human services* (pp. 3-10). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Hopkins, K., Meyer, M., Shera, W., & Peters, S.C. (2014). Leadership challenges facing non-profit human service organizations in a post-recession era. *Human Service Organizations: Management, Leadership & Governance*, 38, 419-422.
- Howe, K., & Eisenhardt, M. (1990). Standards for qualitative (and quantitative) research: A prolegomenon. *Educational Researcher*, 19(4), 2-9.
- Jaskyte, K. (2004). Transformational leadership, organizational culture, and innovativeness in nonprofit organizations. *Nonprofit Leadership & Management*, 15, 153-168.
- Keith, K.M. (2010). *The characteristics of servant leaders*. Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership. Retrieved from www.greenleaf.org.
- Kouzes, J. M., & Posner, B.Z. (2007). *The leadership challenge* (4th ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

- Kramer, R. (2011). Trust and distrust in the leadership process: A review and assessment of theory and evidence. In A. Bryman, D. Collinson, K. Grint, B. Jackson & M. Uhl-Bien (Eds.), *The sage handbook of leadership* (pp. 136-150). London, England: Sage.
- Lapadat, J.C. (2013). Thematic analysis. *Encyclopedia of Case Study Research*, Dec., 926-928.
- Lawler, J. (2007). Leadership in social work: A case of caveat emptor? *British Journal of Social Work*, 37, 123-141.
- Lawler, J., & Bilson, A. (2010). *Social work management and leadership: Managing complexity with creativity*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Lencioni, P. (2002). *The five dysfunctions of a team: A leadership fable*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Lewis, J.A., Packard, T.R., & Lewis, M.D. (2012). *Management of human service programs*. Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole.
- Lincoln, Y.S., & Guba, E.G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Mary, N.L. (2005). Transformational leadership in human service organizations. *Administration in Social Work*, 29(2), 105-118.
- McBeath, B., & Briggs, H. (2008). Designing client-centered, performance-based human service programs. In L. Ginsberg (Ed.), *Management and leadership in social work education* (pp. 126-139). Alexandria, VA: Council on Social Work Education.
- McBeath, B., Collins-Camargo, C., Chuang, E., Wells, R., Bunger, A.C., Perez Jolles, M. (2014). New directions for research on the organizational and institutional context of child welfare agencies: Introduction to the symposium on "The Organizational and Managerial Context of Private Child Welfare Agencies." *Children and Youth Services Review*, 38, 83-92.

McCracken, G. (1988). *The long interview*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

McDonald, C., & Chenoweth, L. (2009). Leadership: A crucial ingredient in unstable times.

Social Work & Society, 7(1), 102-112.

Ministry of Children and Youth Services (Nov. 2012). *Moving on mental health: A system that makes sense for children and youth*. Retrieved from

<http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/english/documents/topics/specialneeds/mentalhealth/momh.pdf>

Ministry of Children and Youth Services (Jan. 2013). *Blueprint for fundamental change to Ontario's child welfare system*. Retrieved from

<http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/topics/childrensaid/childrensaidsocieties/ports/youthleavingcare.aspx>

Ministry of Children and Youth Services (June 20, 2013). *News release: Better access to mental health services for children and youth*. Retrieved from

<https://news.ontario.ca/mcys/en/2013/06/better-access-to-mental-health-services-for-children-and-youth.html>

Ministry of Children and Youth Services (Sept. 2013). *Draft child and youth mental health service framework*. Retrieved from

<http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/documents/topics/specialneeds/mentalhealth/ServiceFramework.pdf>

Ministry of Children and Youth Services (March, 2014). *Growing together: Ministry of children and youth services 2013-2018 Strategic Plan*. Retrieved from

<http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/documents/about/stratplan13-18.pdf>

Ministry of Children and Youth Services (2014). *Results-based plan briefing book, 2014-15*.

Retrieved from

http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/documents/about/Results_2014-2015.pdf

Ministry of Children and Youth Services (Jan. 22, 2016). *News release: Ontario hiring more mental health workers for children and youth*. Retrieved from

https://news.ontario.ca/mcys/en/2016/01/ontario-hiring-more-mental-health-workers-for-children-and-youth.html?_ga=1.205380432.1510804380.1458233369

Mizrahi, T., & Berger, C.S. (2005). A longitudinal look at social work leadership in hospitals:

The impact of a changing health care system. *Health & Social Work, 30*(2), 155-165.

Mumford, T.V., Campion, M.A., & Morgeson, F.P. (2007). The leadership skills strataplex:

Leadership skill requirements across organizational levels. *The Leadership Quarterly, 18*, 154-166.

Northouse, P.G. (2013). *Leadership theory and practice (6th ed.)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Olson, M. (2010). Document analysis. *Encyclopedia of Case Study Research*, 319-321. Retrieved

from <http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781412957397.n120>

O'Connor, M. K., & Netting, F. E. (2009). *Organization practice: A guide to understanding human service organizations*. (2nd ed.). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies (OACAS, Jan. 2006). *Pre-budget report to the standing committee on finance and economic affairs*. Retrieved from

[https://www.google.com/url?q=http://www.oacas.org/pubs/oacas/presentations/oacasprebudgetetc
onsultationreport06Jan26.pdf](https://www.google.com/url?q=http://www.oacas.org/pubs/oacas/presentations/oacasprebudgetetconsultationreport06Jan26.pdf)

Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies (OACAS, 2014). *Annual Report 2013-2014*.

Retrieved from http://www.oacas.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/13_14_Eng.pdf

Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies (OACAS, 2015). *Annual Report 2014-2015*.

Retrieved from <http://www.oacas.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/OACAS-Annual-Report-2014.pdf>

Ontario Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health (n.d.). *How we help*. Retrieved from <http://www.excellenceforchildand youth.ca/how-we-help>

Packard, T. (1989). Participation in decision making, performance, and job satisfaction in a social work bureaucracy. *Administration in Social Work*, 13(1), 59-73.

Packard, T., Patti, R., Daly, D., Tucker-Tatlow, J., & Farrell, C. (2008). Cutback management strategies: Experiences in nine county human service agencies. *Administration in Social Work*, 32(1), 55-75.

Packard, T. (2009). Leadership and performance in human service organizations. In R. J. Patti (Ed.), *The handbook of human services management* (2nd ed., p. 143-164). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Packard, T., Patti, R., Daly, D., & Tucker-Tatlow, J. (2013). Implementing integration and interagency collaboration: Experiences in seven counties. *Administration in Social Work*, 37, 356-371.

Packard, T., McCrae, J., Phillips, J., & Scannapieco, M. (2015). Measuring organizational change tactics to improve child welfare programs: Experiences in 13 Counties. *Human Service Organizations: Management, Leadership & Governance*, 39, 444-458.

Parry, K. (2011). Leadership and organization theory. In A. Bryman, D. Collinson, K. Grint, B. Jackson & M. Uhl-Bien (Eds.), *The sage handbook of leadership* (pp.53-70). London, England: Sage.

- PART (Practice and Research Together, n.d.). *Using evidence to promote excellence in child welfare*. Retrieved from <http://www.partcanada.org/>
- Patton, M. (2002). Fieldwork strategies and observation methods. *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (3rd ed., pp. 259-338). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Pauly, B. M. (2010). Direct observation as evidence. *Encyclopedia of Case Study Research*, 302-305. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781412957397.n114>
- Perlmutter, F.D., & Crook, W.P. (2004). *Changing hats while managing change: From social work practice to administration* (2nd ed.). Washington, DC: NASW Press.
- Petter, J., Byrnes, P., Choi, D-L., Fegan, F., & Miller, R. (2002). Dimensions and patterns in employee empowerment: Assessing what matters to street-level bureaucrats. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 12(3), 377-401.
- Pine, B., Warsh, R., & Maluccio, A. (1998). Participatory management in a public child welfare agency: A key to effective change. *Administration in Social Work*, 22(1), 19-32.
- Plitt Donaldson, L. (2008). Developing a progressive advocacy program within a human services agency. *Administration in Social Work*, 32(2), 25-48.
- Rank, M., & Hutchison, W. (2000). An analysis of leadership within the social work profession. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 36(3), 487-502.
- Rhee, K.S., & Sigler, T.H. (2015). Untangling the relationship between gender and leadership. *Gender in Management*, 30(2), 109-134.
- Rubin, A., & Babbie, E. (2011). *Research methods for social work*. (7th ed.). Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole.
- Schein, E.H. (2010). *Organizational culture and leadership*. (4th ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

- Seidle, B., Fernandez, S., & Perry, J.L. (2016). Do leadership training and development make a difference in the public sector? A panel study. *Public Administration Review*, 10, 1-11.
- Senge, P., Hamilton, H., & Kania, J. (2015). The dawn of system leadership. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Winter 2015, p. 26-33.
- Shera, W., & Page, J. (1995). Creating more effective human service organizations through strategies of empowerment. *Administration in Social Work*, 19(4), 1-15.
- Sorenson, G., Goethals, G., & Haber, P. (2011). The enduring and elusive quest for a general theory of leadership: Initial efforts and new horizons. In A. Bryman, D. Collinson, K. Grint, B. Jackson & M. Uhl-Bien (Eds.), *The sage handbook of leadership* (pp. 29-36). London, England: Sage.
- Tafvelin, S., Hyvonen, U., & Westerberg, K. (2014). Transformational leadership in the social work context: The importance of leader continuity and co-worker support. *British Journal of Social Work*, 44, 886-904.
- Teram, E. (2010). Organizational change within morally ambiguous contexts: A case study of conflicting postmerger discourses. *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 46 (1), 38-54.
- Turner, L.M., & Shera, W. (2005). Empowerment of human service workers: Beyond intra-organizational strategies. *Administration in Social Work*, 29(3), 79-94.
- Uhl-Bien, M., & Marion, R. (2011). Complexity leadership theory. In A. Bryman, D. Collinson, K. Grint, B. Jackson & M. Uhl-Bien (Eds.), *The sage handbook of leadership* (pp. 468-482). London, England: Sage.
- Wallace, P. (2010). Anonymity and confidentiality. *Encyclopedia of Case Study Research*, 23-25. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781412957397.n9>

- Wallach, V.A., & Mueller, C.W. (2006). Job characteristics and organizational predictors of psychological empowerment among paraprofessionals within human service organizations: An exploratory study. *Administration in Social Work*, 30(1), 95-115.
- Warren, M., Johnston, J., Cicek, S., & Bustard, R. (Dec., 2013). *Lead agency capacity: Guiding the implementation of new pathways to care*. Toronto: Children's Mental Health Ontario. Retrieved from http://www.kidsmentalhealth.ca/documents/lead_agency_capacity-guiding_the_implementation_of_new_pathways_to_care.pdf
- Warren, M., Johnston, J., Ruffolo, F., Bustard, R., & Moran, K. (2014). *Multi-sector collaboration: Strengthening the community-based mental health sector by improving coordination and communication across the child serving system*. Toronto: Children's Mental Health Ontario. Retrieved from <http://www.kidsmentalhealth.ca/documents/cmho-pos-multi-sector-collaboration-2014.pdf>
- Webster, M. (2010). Complexity approach to frontline social work management: Constructing an emergent team leadership design for a managerialist world. *Social Work and Social Sciences Review*, 14(1), 27-46.
- Webster, M., & McNabb, D. (2014). *Challenging current managerialism in organisationally-based social work services through ethical leadership*. Paper presented at the Joint World Conference on Social Work Education and Social Development, Melbourne, Australia, 9-12 July 2014. Retrieved from <http://hdl.handle.net/10652/3144>
- Westhues, A., Lafrance, J., & Schmidt, G. (2001). A SWOT analysis of social work education in Canada. *Social Work Education*, 20(1), 35-56.
- Wuenschel, P.C. (2006). The diminishing role of social work administrators in social service agencies: Issues for consideration. *Administration in Social Work*, 30(4), 5-18.

Yin, R. (2009). *Case study research: Design and methods* (4th ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Yukl, G. (2011). Contingency theories of effective leadership. In A. Bryman, D. Collinson, K.

Grint, B. Jackson & M. Uhl-Bien (Eds.) *The Sage Handbook of Leadership* (pp.286-298).

London, England: Sage.